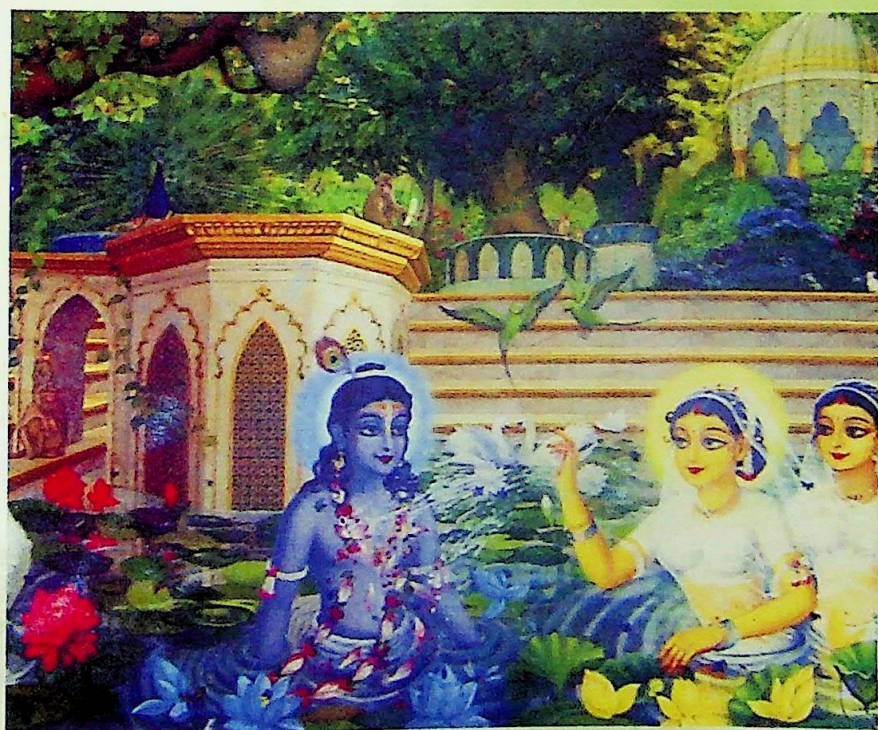
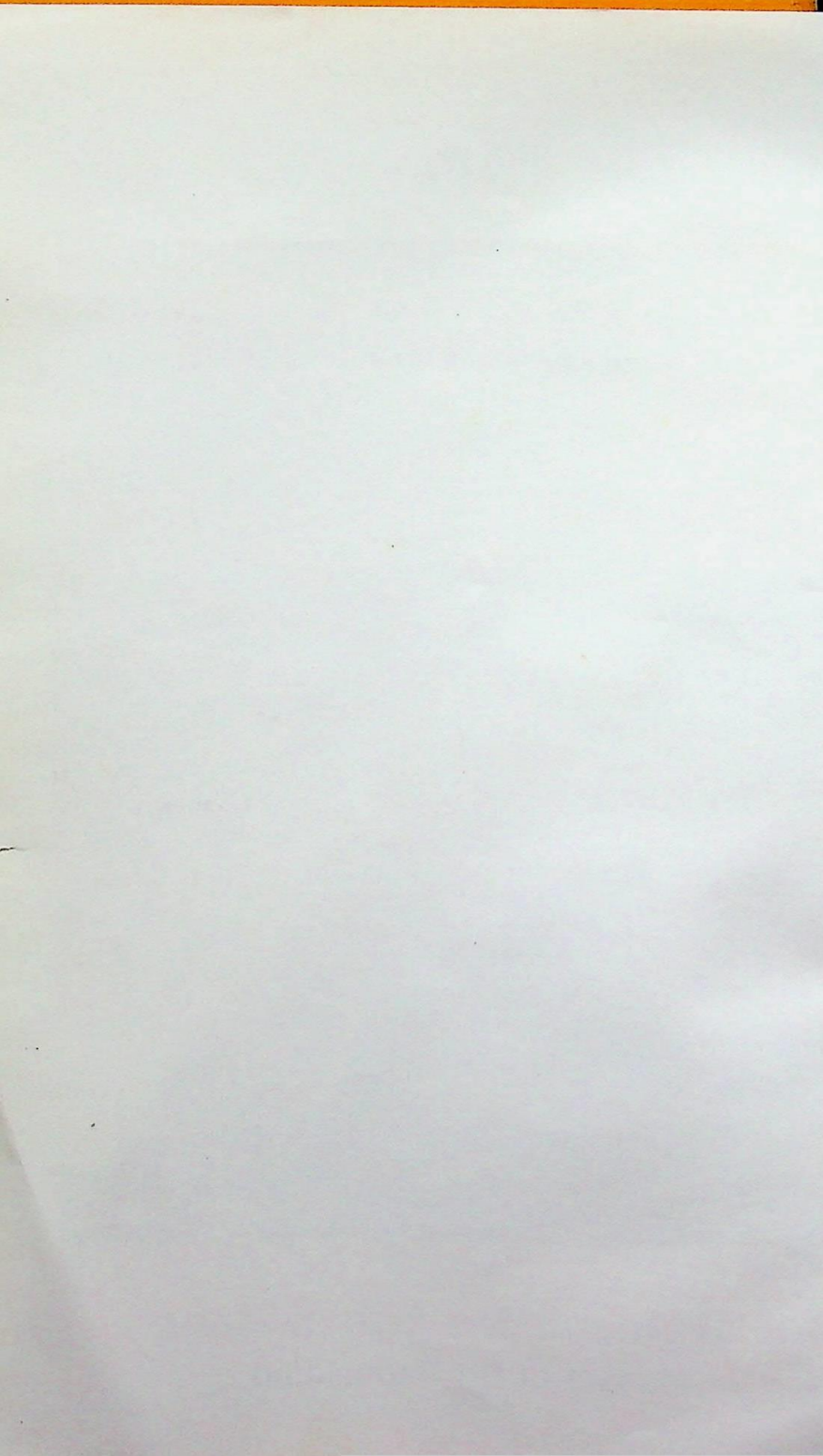


The Glory and Heritage of Sri Sri Radhakund

**(The Topmost Place from the
Spiritual World on planet Earth!)**



Srimat Anantadas Babaji Maharaj
Mahant of Sri Radhakund



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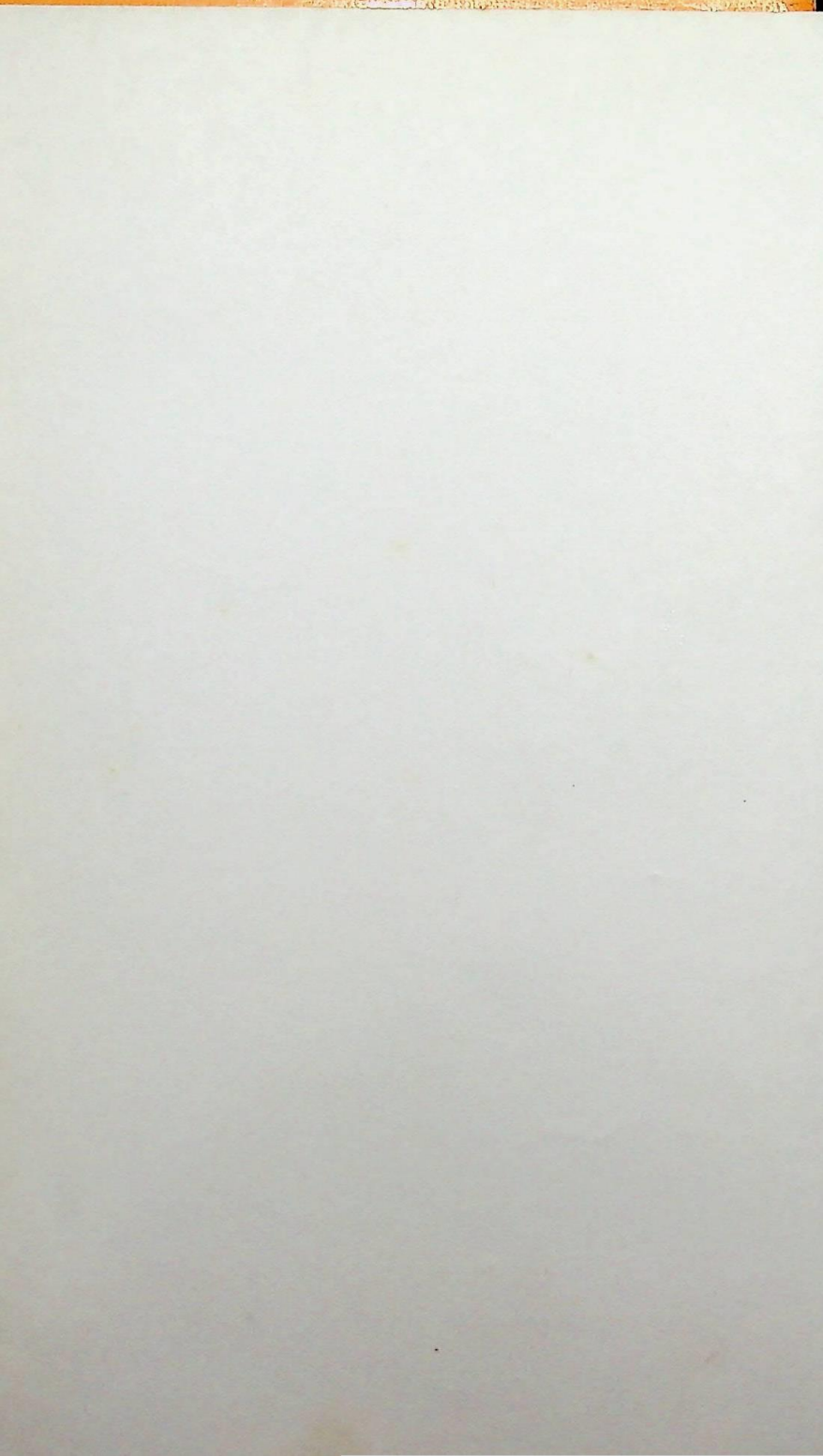
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the glory
and
heritage
of
इगो इगो राधीकण्ड

By

Srimat Ananta Das Babaji Maharaj

Mahant

Of

Sri Sri Radhakund.

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HOLY INVOCATIONS

*Gurave gaura-chandraya radhikayai tadalaḥ,
Krishnaya Krishna-bhaktaya tadbhaktaya namo namaḥ.*

*Yatha radha priya vishnostasyaḥ kundaṁ priyaṁ tatha,
Sarvagopishu sevaika vishnoratyasta vallabha.*

- Sri Padmapurana

*Vaikunthat-janita vara madhupuri tatrapī raasotsavad-
vrindaranyam-udara-pani ramanat-tatrapī govardhanah,
Sri Radhakundam-ihapi gokulapateḥ prema-amrita-plavanat
kuryad-yasya virajato giritate sevāt viveki na kaḥ.*

- Sripad Rupa Goswami

Meaning – “*Mathura* is greater than *Vaikuntha*; within *Mathura Sri Vrindavan* is greater since it is the location of the *Raas* festival. Therein *Sri Govardhan* is greater since *Sri Govinda* enacts His pleasure sports here. Therein *Sri Radhakund* is greater since it is flooded with the nectarine love of *Gokulapati Sri Krishnachandra*. Is there any conscious person who would not serve this *Sri Radhakund* present at the foothills of *Govardhan*?”

Offering

*This text is being offered devoutly in the
lotus-palms of all Vaishnavas who are
the embodiments of Sri Kundeshwari's
mercy and have sought refuge at Sri
Radhakund. It is they who have
verily cooled the scorched heart
of this fallen soul by the dense
shade of their affectionate
sympathy and made it
ever grateful by
arousing in it
a tendency
for
Sri Harikatha.*

PREFACE



On the banks of River Godavari, Srimanmahaprabhu had questioned Sri Ramananda Roy -----

“ *Sarva tyaji jivera kartavya kahan vasa ?*”

Meaning : “Giving up everything material where ought the Jiva live?”

Ramananda Roy replied - “ *Vraja bhumi Vrindavan yahan Lila Raas*”.

Meaning : “In Vraja – Bhumi Vrindavan where the Raas – Lila is performed”.

Sri Rupa Goswami has also mentioned in Bhakti Rasamrita Sindhu, that living in Vraja is one of the highest indispensable parts of Bhajan. It is said, that, if a *sadhaka* cannot actually live in Vraja, he should at least, live there mentally, always. The opportunity to live in *Dham* is very rare. However it is extremely powerful. Let alone living, even if one comes in mere contact with *Dham*, Lord Krishna, Who is the subject and inspiration of *Bhava* appears in the heart of an inoffensive devotee. Sometimes we see that inspite of practising *bhajan* for many years in the all-powerful transcendental *Dham*, *Prema-bhakti* remains far from our reach. There is only one reason – offenses. If we do not know the original form (*swarupa*) of a particular thing, it is an offence by itself. Especially, *Sri Dham* and

Sri Dhamvasis both appear to be material to an ordinary devotee. Yet, unless and until we consider both as transcendental, our *Sri Dhamvas* will never be successful. Srila Prabodhananda Saraswatipad has written in *Sri Vrindavan Mahimamrita* (17.83)-

“ Svananda – sachhcid – ghana – rupta matir – yavanna Vrindavan vasi jantuhu, tavat pravihstopi na tatra vindate tato – paradhat padavim parat – param.”

Meaning: “ Even if we enter Vrindavan, unless and until we consider each and every living entity of Vrindavan as filled with the *rasa* of blissful love, eternity and consciousness, we shall only commit offences. Due to these offence we will never attain the highest title (that of a maid-servant of Sri Radha).”

Hence, before entering *Sri Dham*, we should definitely become aware of the form, philosophy and glory of *Sri Dham*. The aim of this tiny book is to reveal the original form and little bit of the glory of Sri Radhakund-Shyamakund which are the crest-jewel of Vrajadham.

My most worshiped *Nityalila-pravihsta* Sri Sri Guru Maharaj had published a small booklet titled “**The Appearance and Glory of Sri Sri Radhakund and Shyamakund.**” In this booklet he had published 20 verses composed by Srila Vishwanatha Chakravartipad describing the incidents after the killing of Arishtasura as mentioned in *Srimad Bhagavatam*. He had also explained these verses. Here Srila Chakravartipad has described the creation of Sri Kundos. When the booklets got over many Vaishnavas and other devotees inspired this humble unworthy person to reveal the philosophy, source, history and glory of Sri Kund. I had to obey them most submissively.

On the completion of 500 years of Sri Sri Krishna Chaitanya Mahaprabhu's appearance the then Mahant Srila Shachinandan dasji Maharaj and other *virakta* Vaishnavas sheltered in Sri Radhakund had resolved to clean the mire of the lakes. The desire to commemorate that auspicious occasion had risen in the heart of this humble person. Hence the publication of “**The Glory and Heritage of Sri Radhakund**” (the Bengali version).

This book contains facts from-----

- 1) Sri Krishna Sandarbha by Srila Jiva Goswami
- 2) Sri Vrindavan Mahimamrita by Srila Prabodhananda
- 3) Das Goswami who was sheltered in Sri Radhakund
- 4) History of Sri Radhakund by the ex-Mahant of Sri Radhakund , Srila Nabadweepa dasji Maharaj,

Srimati Prema Banerjee, a good devotee, has borne the entire cost of publishing this text, to cherish the memory of her dear departed husband **Sri Anup Kumar Banerjee**, himself a devotee *par excellence*. We pray at the Lotus Feet of Sri Kundeshwari for the welfare of her *Bhajan*. We would also like to extend our heartfelt thanks to **Sri Pradip Gupta** and **Master Pranav** for offering the priceless Computer-seva without which this text would not have been possible. We are grateful to **Srimati Purnima Basak** for helping with the proof reading.

My dear good devotees, if you rectify the mistakes made by me and relish the glory of Sri Radhakund, then this humble soul will consider his attempt fruitful in all respects!

Jay Sri Radhe!

Ananta das

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Sri Sri Radha-Krishnabhyam namah

the glory and heritage of इरी इरी radhakunde

Sri Sri Radhakund, the crest jewel of *Vraja*, has been extensively glorified in the scriptures. However, we are unable to perceive any of these glories due to our material vision. That wish fulfilling gem of a land, the jewel studded throne under the gem-filled wishing tree -- those banks strewn with coral and gems - that transcendental beauty and sweetness of gardens that are alive with dancing peacocks, singing cuckoos and nightingales, buzzing bees, fragrant with lotuses, served by the gentle breeze of spring - none of these are visible to our material eyes. The scriptures say - "*adrshyam charma-chaksusha*," which means "invisible to material eyes." Modern astronomers say that there are many stars, whose light has not yet reached the world. This does not mean that they do not exist. When this is the state of material things, then it is evident that a different type of vision is required in order to perceive spiritual things.

Although Divine places such as Vrindavan are situated in this world, they are beyond worldly perception - just as the conscious super soul (Paramatma) is always different and detached from the body in spite of living in the material body. Just as the super soul is not destroyed even after the destruction of the body, in the same way, the Divine places do not perish even after the dissolution of the material world. The Gaudiya Vaishnava teachers have proved that the '*Dham*' or Divine places are as eternal as the forms of the Supreme Personality.

Not only this, Srila Vishwanatha Chakravarti has mentioned that the beautiful illumination of the worldly *Sri Dham* is more beautiful than the brilliance of the transcendental places. He has said so in his

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purport to the verse "*Prapancham nisprapancho 'pi vidam vayasi bhutale*" which is a part of 'Brahma's prayer'. If we keep a diamond a white glass vessel, it does not look so beautiful as it would have, had it been displayed in a blue and yellow casket. In the same way, the pastimes of the Lord are displayed more nicely in the *Dham* in this world rather than in the *Dham* beyond this world. Although the *Dham* in this world is also transcendental, the human-like pastimes of the Supreme Lord gain more sweetness since it is displayed in this world.

Srila Jiva Gosvami, the *Gaudiya Vaishnava* preceptor has made this statement about *Sri Dham* in his *Sri Krishna Sandarbha* -

"*Ya Yatha bhuvi vartante puryo bhagavatah priyah, tastatha shanti Vaikunthe tat-tat-lilarthamadrtah. Iti skanda-vacana-anusarena vaikunthe yad yat-sthanam vartate tatadeveti mantavyam, tesamapi vaikunthantarvat prapancatitvatva nityat-alaukika-rupatva - bhagavat-nityaspadatva kathanat,-----dvaraka-- mathura-- gokulatamakah sriKrishnalokah svayam bhagavato visharaspadatvena bhavati sarvopariti siddham , ----esam ca prakasah prthivi'stho pyantardhanasktya tamasprsanmaiva virajate. Atastaya na sprsyate prthivya dibhutamayairasma bhirvarahoktamahakadamba diriva, yustu prapancikalokagocar mathuradi prakasah lokam kripaya prthivim sprsanneva vatirnah,----asmimsca prakase yada vatirnobhugavamstuda tats sparsenapi tatsparsattam sprsannevate sama samprat tad asprstaprakase viharamanah punarasprsanneva bhavati.*"

Meaning - "All the *Dham* that are dear to the Lord, that exist in this world, are also existent in exactly the same form in *Vaikuntha* (the spiritual world) in order to fulfil His pastimes. According to *Skandapurana*, the *Dham* that are present in the transcendental world are also present in this world and the Lord enjoys Himself here. The *Dham* of this world have all the qualities of *Vaikuntha* - which is they are also eternal, transcendental and unworldly. Amongst all *Dham*,

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Dvaraka, Mathura and Gokul are the topmost because Lord *Krishna* has enjoyed His pastimes here.

THE SWARUPA OF SRI DHAM

Dham exists in three ways –

- (1) Non - apparent
- (2) Visible
- (3) Apparent

(1) NON - APPARENT MANIFESTATION : -

It is that part of *Dham* where Lord *Krishna* is still enjoying himself. Although this part exists in this world, it is invisible to us. It is untouched by this material world. So just as we are unable to perceive the great Kadamba trees (as mentioned in the 'Varahapurana') on account of our material bodies, in the same way the world is unable to touch this part of *Dham*.

"Aprakrita Dham nahe prakrita gochar."

- (C.C.)

Meaning - " *Dham* is transcendental and cannot be perceived by material senses."

(2) VISIBLE MANIFESTATION :-

It is that part of *Dham* that we, the worldly mortals are able to see. It is that part which is mercifully touching this world. If a person becks and calls from beyond a great ocean, we can never go there. But if a ship mercifully arrives at this coast and takes us there, we would be grateful. In the same way, *Sri Dham* has mercifully descended on this earth to take us back to the spiritual world where we would have never managed to go on our own. Some people think that the

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Vrindavan we are seeing is not really *Dham* but just a region of this world and that *Dham* existed only during the pastimes of Lord *Krishna*. Such thinking is factually wrong.

In spite of being beyond all illusion and having a transcendental, blissful and eternal form, Lord *Krishna* descends on this earth and accepts many human characteristics only to shower His mercy upon us. In the same way *Dham* such as *Vrindavan* is beyond illusion and is transcendental. He is present on the earth eternally in order to shower mercy upon us. Just as Lord *Krishna* accepts human characteristics, *Sri Dham* also accepts worldly nature out of kindness for us. Without this mercy, we would have never been able to perceive *Sri Dham*. As a result we would have never gained the mercy of *Dham*.

(4) APPARENT MANIFESTATION :-

When Lord *Krishna* descends in the visible form of *Dham*, He performs various pastimes. The places where the pastimes are performed also become apparent. This is called apparent manifestation. When *Krishna* enjoys in this form, He touches the visible part. By touching *Dham*, He touches the earth. Hence it is said-

"yavat sa padapadmabhyam sprsannaste ramapatih, tavat kalirvai prthivim parakrantum na ca sakat."

- S.B.. 12.2.30.

Meaning - "Till Earth was touched by the lotus feet of *Krishna*, *kali* (iron age) was not able to attack her."

The visible portion touches the earth. If *Krishna* touches this portion, it means He is touching the earth as well. Just now, however, *Krishna* is enjoying in the non-apparent portion that does not touch the earth. Actually, the same transcendental *Vraja Dham* which exists at the

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peak of the spiritual world and is the abode of *Krishna's* eternal pastimes, has appeared in infinite portions of infinite universes viz.-

“Beyond the material world lies the spiritual world. Its opulence is the same as that of the Deity of *Krishna*. All *Dham* such as *Vaikuntha* are eternal, opulent and conscious. Lord *Krishna* and His incarnations rest therein. Above this is *Krishna-loka* (the abode of *Krishna*). It comprises of *Dvaraka*, *Mathura* and *Gokul*. Above all is *Sri Gokul*, the place where the *Brajavis* live. *Sri Gokul*, *Shvetadvip*, *Vrindavan* are its names. It is non-different from the eternal conscious and opulent form of *Krishna*. It extends above and below – it is unlimited. By *Krishna's* wish it is manifested in the universe. It has only one form – never more than one. It is a touchstone land, containing forests filled with wish fulfilling trees. When we see with material eyes, we feel it is just like this world, but when we see with love-filled eyes, we are able to see its original form complete with *Gopas*, *Gopis* and *Krishna* all enjoying together.”

---- (C.C)

THE SWARUPA OF SRI RADHAKUND

We shall first describe this original form of *Sri Radhakund* – *Shyamakund* and then speak of the visible manifestation. *Srila Prabodhananda Saraswati*, a dear associate of *Mahaprabhu* has described the natural beauty of *Sri Kunda* in his book *Sri Vrindavan Mahimamritam* in this manner –

*Prafulla-divya-mallika-lavanga-jati yuthika, kadamba-
champakavati -sthalaravinda vithibhih, sirisa-kunda-ketaki-
kusumbha kimsukadibhi rmanogya- madhavi latadyananta
puspavallibhih. *102**

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Priyangu naga-kesarair Ashoka-karnikarkaih sfutatimukta-saptata-
 suvarna-yuthikadibhih, viChitrabheda-jhintika-sugandhabandhu
 jivakai rhayari-kubjakadibhih prafullite-vicitritam.

103

Meaning --- "The Sri Kund at the foothills of Giriraj Govardhan have such wondrous beauty! It is decorated with fully bloomed Divine flowers such as Arabian jasmine, cloves, varieties of jasmine, Kadamba, Champaka, land lotus, gum-tree, pine, safflower, infinite flower-laden creepers such as Myrtle, Kinsuka (tree with red flowers), enchanting Priyangu, Nagakesar, Ashoka, Karnika, golden Jasmine etc. variety of Jhintika, fragrant Hayari and Kubjaka".

ViChitra pallava-udgamaih-viChitra puspa sambhrtair viChitra patra
 manjarir viChitra gucchajalakaih, viChitra saurabhodayair viChitra
 sidhuvarsibhih, viChitra rucirujvalaih paraisca
 sakhibhirvrtam. *104*

Meaning - "The Kundas are adorned with a variety of leaves, variety of flowers, variety of inflorescence, variety of leaf-bouquets and variety of brilliant trees filled with variety of fragrances and showering variety of honey."

"Radha - Krishna - rahah katha-anuvadanat ascarya-madhuryavat
 dhanaih srisukasarika vyatikaraivananda sarasavadam, karnakarsi
 kuhuh kuhuriti kalapairvrtam kokilair nrtyanmatta mayuramanyam
 vihagaischanda kotahalam "

105*

Meaning - "Sri Radha-Krishna's nocturnal conversations are being loudly and sweetly translated by the parrot - couples. Their bliss is being enhanced by the cooing cuckoos. The Kundas are echoing with the inexpressible sweet atmosphere of singing cuckoos and dancing peacocks."

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"Tan-madhye nava-manju kunja-valayam sobha-vibhutyā samanordham divya-viChitra ratnala-tilakady-ananda puspasriya, antastalpavaram vara-upakaranairadhyam samantaddadhad radha-madhava bhukta bhogyamakhila nandaika samrajyabhuh" . *106*.

Meaning – "Therein lie new, attractive flower-groves that are of incomparable beauty. There are blissful creepers laden with gemstones. In the flower groves there is a superb bed which is conspicuous due to sheer luxury. It is decorated all around with articles that have been used and the ones that will be used by the *Divine Couple*. Thus every corner is flooded with bliss."

"Madhya tadrśa kunjamandalamahō Kundam mahamohanam sandranandamaharasa mrtabharaiḥ svacchaiḥ sada sambhrtam ratnabaddhacatustativilasitam sadratna sopanavat tirtham Sritatasatkadambaka -talacchaya manikuttimam." *107*

Meaning – "Oh ! Amidst these flower-groves exist the all-attractive *Kundas* --- always filled with most blissful, clear nectarine water — their banks are bound with precious jewels, their steps are decked with gems and under the shade of the Kadamba trees there are bejeweled pavements."

"Gadhagadhataya tayoratimudam kurvat parāpresthayo mṇa-divya-rasottama-anavasare vyanjattayoh pritaye, ascayam kamala-utpaladi-kutakayonmilayan-milayan nanaratnamaya ca hatambudhi-alayam vyanjan-nikunja dikam."

108

Meaning – "To bring about blissful enjoyment for the supreme most *Divine Couple*, the *Kundas* are filled with less water somewhere and deep water elsewhere. Some parts are filled with juices. To entertain Their Lordships there are wonderful lotuses and water lilies that keep

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opening and closing their petals. The wavelets are reflecting the brilliance of the gem-studded flower groves.”

*“Nirmaryada mahasaurabha chamat karairvi vardhisnubhi
rmadhuryaisca pade pade adbhutatbamairomnam muhur harsanaih
nana ratnasarojini kumudini mukhair mahasundaram kirnam
puspacayaishtata ksitiruham syandairmadhunamapi. Madhyevari
ratotkayoh rasikayorvyanjanni kunjottamam yadva ratnamaya
atisundaragraham sarvalivismapakam ambhahsambhavadeva vatha
paritoscordham tale svacchasad ratnaksauhini - samihito pakarane
divyaprasunantare”*

109-110

Meaning – “One is thrilled every moment by the greatly exuberant fragrance and the ever-increasing sweetness of the lotuses, water lilies and other flowers that pervade the flower-groves in which the *Divine Couple* sports. One may behold very beautiful wondrous gem-studded abodes of the *sakhis* being reflected in the water, appearing as if they are ascending from the *Kunda* itself. All around there are collections of requirements kept on clear, beautiful gem floors. There are Divine flowers deep inside the *Kundas* as well.”

*“Mahamanimaya-ujvalattata catustaye tyullasad viChitra – bahu-
mandana-adbhutamaho lata mandape viChitra bahu-panktika sfuta-
kadamba-mukhya-adbhuta ca hatamritamaya drumavalisamrddhi
sobhadbhutam”.*

111

Meaning – “Oh! This *Kunda* is all decorated with wonderfully brilliant and nectarean Kadamba trees in full bloom. Adorned with various creepers they stand row by row on the four illuminated and bejeweled banks of the *Kunda*.”

*“RadhaKrishna-parokandarpa-trsna-sindhorvrddhimtanvadatyantam
eva atyascaryam kelivaidagdhyavrindam, vrindaranyanandinoh
sadisaitat”*

112.

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Meaning – “O *Sri Kunda* ! You, who extremely enhance the infinite amorous thirst of *Sri Radha-Krishna*, please reveal unto me the wonderful and skilful pastimes of the *Divine Couple* of *Sri Vrindavan*”.

As an answer to his prayer he was further inspired by a sweet pastime in the *Kunda* –

“ *Madhura-madhura-gunjan-manjurolamba-punje kanaka-kamalini-nam kanane yatra radha priyamadh-igatavakatra bhrantikam padmacumbe svapi nijamukha cumbenasvasantam jahas* ”

113

Meaning – “Once, in the groves of golden lotus-buds in the *Sri Kunda*, *Shyamasundar* had kissed a bunch of golden lotus-buds surrounded by sweetly humming bees mistaking it to be *Radharani*’s face crowned with rippling tresses. Seeing this, *Radharani* had giggled abundantly and then pacified him by offering Her face to be kissed.”

THE BEAUTY OF SRI RADHAKUND

Srila Krishnadas Kaviraj Gosvami, who gained the endless mercy of *Sri Mahaprabhu* has described in detail the transcendental form of *Radha-Shyamkund* and the positions of the flower groves in the seventh chapter of *Sri Govinda Lilamrita*. -----

“*Parito mani-sopana-valibhih parivestitam, catur-bhir-mani-samvaddha-tirthayir-diksu susobhitam. Tirthoparisphurad-ratna-*

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*mandapaih sanganairytam, tattirthorbhaya-parsvastha-manikuttima-
manditam*"

2-3

Meaning – “Oh! *Sri Sri Radhakund* has such inexpressible beauty! On all four sides there are bejeweled steps and banks made of gems. On all four banks, there are bejeweled altars and both sides are adorned with eight benches made of gemstones.”

*“Pratimandapa-parsvastha-taru-sakha-valambanaih gutam- nana-
puspa-vasas-Chittrair-dola – catustayaih. Yamyē champakayoh purve
nipayoramrayoh pare, saumye bakulayorvaddha-ratna-hindo likan-
vitam”*

4-5

Meaning – “Each pavilion is flanked on both sides by swings hanging from branches of trees. The swings are decked with various flowers and decorations. The swings hang from Champaka trees in the south, from the Kadamba trees in the east, from mango trees in the west and Bakula trees in the north. The swings are made of gemstones”.

*“Purvagneya - disormadhye priya kundena sangatam, tatordhe
stambha-kalambi - Chitrasetu - samanvitam”.*

6

Meaning - “In between the east and south - east, where *RadhaKunda* meets *Shyama Kunda*, there is a beautiful bridge erected on gem studded pedestals.”

*“Gala-hrd-udara nabhi-sroni-janurudaghnaish sarudadhi-
vasukonair-mandal-angaisca kaiscit, sisiramanu samusnaih
grismakale susital- suvidha mani-nibaddhrir-diksu sopan-ayuktaish.
Maniruci-jalavici bhranti trsnabhibhuta patita - vihangavrinda cchaloo
balantaralaih, pariyan yuta- radhaKrishnayornarmagasthi - pramada
krdupavesalpavedi - susobhaih. Nicita prthutalanam
kuttimaisChitravarnaih kusumita- bahuvali - slishtakha bhujanam*

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*ghanadala phalapuspa srenibharanatanam vitatibhirabhitah
samvestitam padapanam* *7-9*

Meaning – “The vicinity of *Sri Radhakund* is covered with rows of various prominent trees bowing low, weighed down with dense leaves, flowers and blossoming creepers. At the roots of the trees there are wide, gem-studded pavements decorated with fountains. Such pavements are cool during summer and warm in winter. There are cascades of various shapes, made of gems. Some are as high as one's shoulder, or chest, or knees or waist etc. Some are square, octahedral or round. If you chance upon such gem-cascades all of a sudden, you would mistake them for water-fountains. Sometimes thirsty birds are seen diving and falling on them. Amongst these cascades, Radha - Madhava constantly stroll with their friends.”

*“Catuskonesu vashanti-catuhsala-bhiravrtam, vanira-kesarAshoka-
nikunjaih parito vrtam. Tadvahih paktrima-pakva-phala-puspot-
karakaraih, paritah kadali-sandair-manditam sital-
acchadaihtadvahirvahyo pavanashishta puspatavivrtam, svamadhya -
saliladiviyat sasetu – ratna-mandiram”*

Meaning – “All around the banks there are vernal quadrangles surrounded by groves of *Vanir*, *Kesar* and *Ashoka* trees. Banana trees decorated with ripe and unripe fruits, flowers and cooling leaves, further flank them. This beautiful sight is topped with the marvelous gem-studded altar conceded to the flower - gardens through a bridge on the water.”

*Nanapuspa - phalocchhari - vanadevi - gananvitaih, sevopacara -
samsakta - kunjadasi - satavrtaih. Phalarama - puspravati
madhyasthair vrindayacitaih, sevopakaranagar- ikarairabhito
vrtam.* *13-14*

Meaning – “Under the leadership of *Sri Vrindadevi*, one can find innumerable flowers laden with the ingredients of service to the

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Divine Couple. Goddesses of the forest are seen collecting fruits and tubers. The flower-groves are surrounded by hundreds of maidservants."

"Rturayadi sarvartu-guna-sevita-kananam, vrinda- sammrsta gandhambhah samsiktadhvangana layam. Taya toranakollaca - patakalamba - gucchakaih, paus paiscitrita kunjadhva- dola catvaramandapam."

15-16

Meaning - "The gardens are served by various seasons such as spring, and are cleansed by Sri Vrinda. The pathways, courtyards and dwellings are moistened by fragrant breeze. The flower - arches, flag - staff, the grove- paths decorated by flower bouquets, swings and pavilions all are wonderfully beautiful."

"Navakamaladalali - pallavavrttanana kusumaraeita sayyocchirsa - chandropadhanaih, samadhucasaka - tambula mbupatradi - yuktaih suvalita - talalilagara kunja prapancam. Kahlara raktotpala - pundarikam pankoruhendivara - kairavanam. Ksaram marandaisca patat paragaih suvasitambhah plasaram samantat."

17-18

Meaning - "The groves of Sri Kunda are decorated with fresh bunches of lotus, leaflets, beds of flowers petals, pillows, cushions, honey- filled gimlets, betel-leaves and water-sprinkler. The horizon is fragrant with sweet scent emanating from the water that is perfumed by pollen dust and droplets of honey dripping from fully bloomed lilies, lotuses, Kahlara, red-lotuses, blue-lotuses and other aquatic flowers."

*"Hams-sarasa datyuha madgu-kokadi patrinam varata-laksmadina-
 dinam kalalapaih Srutipriyam. Sarisukanam-anyonya prthagasanga -
 ranginam Krishna-lila-rasollasi kavyalapa-manoharam. Jalada-
 bhrantikrt-Krishnakantiya pranaya-unmadaih,
 adannrtyacchikhivratat vyaptarama - tatajiram. Harita- paravata
 catakadika - pradhrsta - nanavidha Chitrapakshinam,*

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*krishneksananananda - viphulla - varsmanam karnamrita -
dhvanamanangya - kananam Rakesarbuda - nirmanchya -
radhesasyendupyibhih, chakorairnyakrtyakta - chandrairvrta—
nabhastalam”*

21-23

Meaning – “Birds such as ducks, swallows, cranes, signets, swans, cormorants and parrot-couples sport and converse with each other about the sweet and savory pastimes of *Krishna*. The peacocks mishtake *Krishna* to be clouds and start calling and dancing sweetly in the grove-courts. On seeing *Krishna*, the parrots, pigeons, swallows and other birds are thrilled and happily make joyous prattling sounds. The *Chakora* birds abandon the sky beautified with moon, in order to drink the honey from the lotus - face of *Krishna* that puts even a full-moon to shame ! “

*“Vipakva-jala-pakvaphalaih kusuma-allavaih, mukulair-manjari-
bhisca namrair-valli-drumair-vrtam. Aneka - padmakaramadhya-
samsthitam harervitasanvita - tira - nirakam, nanabja -
kanyucchalitam niranantaram gunairjitaksira - samudramadbhutam.
Svasadrktiraniranirena Krishna - padabjanmana, niya parsvopaviste
nArishta kundenam sangatam”*

*24-

26*

Meaning – “Oh! For the pleasure of Lord Hari, the charming shores and water of *Sri Radhakund* are shadowed by trees laden with ripe, half-ripe, and unripe fruits, young shoots, flowers, inflorescence, flower- spikes and creepers. Vast Lotus- forests exist on the floor of the *Kunda*, the brilliance of which is reflected in its waves, thus mocking even the milk-ocean (the abode of Lord Vishnu). Its shores and water mingle with *Sri Shyamakund* that has risen from Lord *Krishna*'s lotus -feet.

*“Tire kunja yasya bhantya stadiksu presthalinam svasva namna
prasidha tabhih promna hastena yatnat kridatustyai presthayoh*

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samskrtya ye. Tattat kashtra - pranta - vicchinna-simarama-udaya
navesanam-sanvitasca tattat simabhyantaro tpanna - vrksa - sreni -
yugmacchanna - vartmaliyuktah. Upari tanu - tarangakara -
citrancisuddha -sphaatikamani - citanyasphara -vartmani tani,
marakata - manivrandairacit-abhyantarani pratanu - laharikulya -
bhrantimut padayanti. Manicayaracanabhi svesu bhitti-bhraman
drak svanikata - manibhittau catmabuddhim dadhadbhiih,
upavanayugamadye dvaravrandairyutani pravisaditara loke
darshanadeva bhanti"

*27-

30*

Meaning - "On the banks of *Sri Radhakund*, from North to North - west, there are eight groves belonging to eight dearest *Sakhis*. Since they are the abodes of the pleasure - sports enjoyed by the *Divine Couple*, the *sakhis* maintain them and cleanse them with their own hands. Small gardens, woodlands and studios surround each grove. Various trees standing in rows shade the pathways to the groves.

Since the narrow pathways are made of small picturesque, wave-like pure crystals and the middle portion is filled with emeralds, they look like tiny wave filled streams. The paths lead to the doorways connecting two small gardens. The doorways are decorated with gems in such a way that ordinary people would mistake the walls to be doors and vice versa."

THE KUNJAS OF THE ASHTASAKHIS

LALITA-ANANDAD-KUNJA : - (The flower - grove that causes pleasure to Lalita)

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"Chakastyudicyam disi trthasannidhavananga rangambuja- nama - catvaram, padmabha - kunjasta - dalairvirajitam suhema - rambhavalī - kesaranvitam Sahasrapatrambuja -asannibhim sphurat suvarna -sat kuttima - manjukarnikam lilanulyocita - santatollasa - duistirnata- laghavamunnata prabham. Lalita sisya nityam kalavatya susanskrtam, sarvartu - sukha sampannam nanakeli - rasakaram"

31-33

Meaning - "In the north of *Sri Radhakund* there is a quadrangle named '*Ananga rangambuja*'. It is surrounded by eight groves shaped like an eight - petalled lotus. Superior golden bananas are its stigma, gold benches shaped like thousand petalled lotuses form the seed - vessel. The quadrangle expands sometimes and contracts at other times, as required by the pastimes of *Radha-Krishna*.

It is extremely brilliant and luminous. Lalita's disciple Kalavati is always careful about its maintenance. The joys of all seasons are available here, according to the pleasure of Their Lordships."

"*Lalitanandadam Radha Krishnayoh savayasyoh, nikunjarajayoh pattaMandiram sphuradindiram. Manikyakesarasreni vestitam svarnakarnikam vahirvahih kramadvarDhamana samkhyā pramanakaih. Ekaikavarna - sadratna - kadambena eitaih prthak, racitam bahubhiscaru samapatrah - mandalaih.*"

34-36

Meaning - "This *Lalitanandadkunjā* filled with all the *sakhis* is the chief Temple and the King of all the *kunjas*. It is opulent with the transcendental beauty of *Sri Sri Radha - Madhava*. The grove is lotus - shaped, its filaments are made of ruby, its seed - vessel is made of gold and each petal is made of different gemstones. Outside the seed-vessel are the filaments bordered with petals whose size and number increase gradually."

"*Pancendriya-alhada-karaih saityadyabyogu - nairiyutam, tadvahih kramasah svarnair-vaichuryair-indra- nilakaih. Sphatikaih padma-ragaisca citair-mandapa- pancakaih, sobhitam mandapa-svantarana-*

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ratna- vinirmitaih. Kevalair-mithuni-bhava - sangatair-mrga
paksibhih devairnrbhiryutam
canyaiscitritairasadipanaih. Pancavarna - bhuriChitra - patra - puspa
visphurat kesaradi sakhi - sakhikali - sadvitanakam, antar asyabhati
janudaghna - ratnakuttimagara - madhya - karnika - sahasra
patrasarasam."

37-40

Meaning - "Five festive-booths surrounding the filaments are enhancing the incomparable beauty of the *kunja*. They are studded with gold, chrysoberyl (cat's eye), sapphire, quartz and ruby respectively. They delight the five senses and are cooling. In the center, there are gem-studded statues of deer, birds, demi-gods, human beings, *gandharvas*, *kinraras* (heavenly musicians and artists) and other living beings in love-making posture, thereby creating an atmosphere of ardor. Trees beautified with white, red, green, yellow and blue colored flowers and leaves form superior canopy. Such wonderful festive-booths also contain knee-high gem-studded benches resembling a seed-vessel."

VASANTA-SUKHADA-KUNJA : - (the flower grove that harbors the joys of spring)

"Amula-puspitAshoka-vallimandala-sancayaih sitaruna-harita-pita-
Shyama-puspaih prakalpitaiah. Padmapuspa- dala-karair-upakunja-
ashtakair-vrtam pravina - tads- Ashokataru kunja-
varatakam. Vasanta sukhadam yasya bhrnga-kokil - naditam.
Vayavyam disi bhatyastadala - kunjambujam - dalam."

Meaning - "In the North - west of Ananga-rangambuja quadrangle, there is Vasantasukhad flower-grove. It is filled with Ashoka creepers and flowers from top to bottom. It is adorned with white, orange, green, yellow and dark blue flowers. It is designed with various creepers. Huge Ashoka trees laden from top to bottom with flowers are its filaments and it is surrounded by eight lotus-shaped

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small *kunja*. It is always a-buzzing with the sweet sound of bees and cuckoos.

PADMA MANDIR : (The Lotus - Temple)

*SripadmaMandiram namam nairrtyam rajate dalam, Caturdvaram
catusparsve Vatayana Samanvitam. Nanamanicitaneka - Chitrabhitti -
catustayam, antah saKrishna gopinam purvaragadi
cestitaih. Raskunjavilasaisca lalita citritairyutam, putanArishtha -
samharadyanta - taccairitairvahih. *44-46**

Meaning - "There is a spot named Sri Padma Mandir in the South-west of Lalitanandad *kunja*. It has doors and windows on all four sides. Its walls are studded with gems. Lalitadevi has painted various pictures on the walls, such as - courtship of *Krishna* and the *gopis*, Raas - dance, dalliance in the flower - groves. Outside she has painted all the pastimes of *Krishna* right from killing of Putana to the killing of Arishta."

*" Ratnali - dyuti - kinjalkam sad-garbhagara - karnikam vahirabja
dalakarai rvrtam sodasa-kosthakaih. Tat-tad-yugantaral-asthair-
dvyasto pakosthakair-api urddhe tadrk - sannivesa - sphuradat-
talika-anvitam. Antarantah kramad-ucca - nirbhitti - stambha-
pantkisu sphatikisu suvinyasta pravala - balabhi - kule. Chaditena
maharatna - pata laishtaryag-urdhagaih, bhrajitena sukumbhena
sikharena virajitam. Atyuccena vanaloka sukhadena nijesayoh
mukta parsva-trtiyoccakhandena-ca-sumanaditam." *47-51**

Meaning - "There are sixteen mansions shaped as lotus - petals. Its rooms are its seed- vessel and brilliant gems make up its filament. Within these sixteen mansions, there are sixteen small mansions. In the upper portion of the Temple there are sixteen mansions having smaller mansions. Over and above there are crystal pillars decorated with coral turrets which are topped with an ascending curved roof made of most precious gems to protect from rain etc. On the roof

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there are well-decorated gem-filled pinnacles that spread joy all around. On the third floor of this Temple, there is a balcony surrounded by various gemstones. *Sri Sri Radha-Krishna* admire the beauty of the woodlands from the top of this high-rise mansion."

"Adhoratna-citaneka - Chitra - citrena bhasvata, upa-kuttimadi-gantardiksu sopana - sobhina. Kantha-daghna tivistirna - kuttimena-abhitovrtam, paritastavaduccnam prantotpannam-mahiruham. Phalaih puspasca samslishta kuttimapranta deshakam, keliratnakaram radhaKrishnayoh savayasyayeh"

52-54

Meaning- "Below are small pavements studded with gems and painted with attractive pictures. In between each pair of such pavements, there are flights of stairs surrounded by neck - high pedestals strewn with flowers and fruits. In the background, trees laden with various flowers and fruits are spreading great beauty everywhere. This is the reservoir for all sports indulged in by *Sri Radha - Krishna* along with their *sakhis*"

HINDOLA-KUTTAM : (Swing - Ground)

Madhyagau Radhikacyutau, Gayadanyavayasyabh Agneyam Bhati Pasmabha Satnahindola Kuttimam Purvapara-digutpanna - pravina - bakulagayoh. Saci Kincid-vinirgatya Gatyā Vakraordhayopari Militabhyam Susakhabhyam Chaditam Mandapakrti. Tacchakhamula - Samnaddhaih Pattarajju - Catustayai, Drdharbaddha Catuskonam Nabhimatrocca - Samstithi. Padmaragasca Pattibhih pravalaja - padstakoi, ghatitam hastamatrocca - pathivestama kesaram. Dvyasta patrambuja kara - ratnali - Chitrakarnikam, dvidvi padanvitambhoja - dalabhasta - dalairvrtam. Ratnapatti kesaranta-rdvar-ashtaka - susamyutam, Daksine dala - parsva-stharo-hadvara - dvayankitam. Laghustam bhadvayasakta - Patti prstha valambakam, Patta tutilasan-madhyam Parsva-prstho-padhanakam Nan-Chitram-sukaiscchannam Svarna-

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sutrambarairapi, Lasac-chandravali - Mukta dama -
Gucchavitanakam Yatra-astadala-galinam irvrinda dolayatis varau.
Suarudha - Radhacyutayoh Sarvabhimukhato Karam, Hindola-
ambujamabhathi Madanandolana bhidham"
 55-64

Meaning - "In the south - east corner of Lalitanandad *kunja* there are gem-filled swing - grounds shaped as lotuses. In the east and west, a pair of Bakula trees is forming a curved canopy on this ground. From the roots of these branches, an attractive swing has been let down. All four sides of the swing are tied firmly with jute ropes. The swing is navel-high. It has eight straps of ruby and eight lotuses of corals. It is surrounded by two rows of lotuses.

The swing has tiny pillars to support the backsides of Radha - *Krishna*. In the middle there are silk mattresses, and there are cushions at the side and back. These are covered with wonderfully painted cloths embroidered with golden threads. The seat is shaded by a canopy decorated with artificial moons, pearl - strings and flowers. The *Divine Couple* seated on this eight - petalled lotus - swing, surrounded by eight principal *sakhis*, each seated on a petal, is swung by Vrindadevi. She is assisted by other *sakhis* standing below, singing sweet songs. When *Radha-Krishna* ascend that swing, that can set Cupid a - fluttering, each *sakhi* feels as if the *Divine Couple* is right in front of her."

MADHAHA-ANANDAD-KUNJA : - (The flower - grove that courses pleasure to Madhava)

"Aisyanyam bhaty-asta-patram madhavi-kunja sarasam, madhava-anandadam-nama nan-alilopahara-yuktam. Phulla-malatibhiraslishta - narma-sakha-bhujovrajaih, chaditam phulla-punn-agaischandra-kanti eitantaram. Padma-patrakara kunjair-vestitam svarna-karnikam, udcyam man-ikinjalkam bhati kunjam sitambujam.

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Narmasakha bhujaslishta - phullahemalata cayaih, tamalaih kalpitam
 jishn-unilaratna-vaticitam. Nilap-admadala karai-rupakunjasta
 kairvrtam, suvarna-karnikam pracyam bhati kunjastam-bujam.
 avacyam padmaragadi - citantarbahya mandalam, lavangais
 chaditam phullairbhati kunja-arun-aambujam.. Kunjam hemambujam
 bhati pracyam phulla-champakaih, vallibhischaditam hemacita
 vahyantaralakam. Evam-uttarad-ikkunya bhanti radha haripriyah,
 nanavarna karabhedat drsam vismayakarinah." *65-72*

Meaning - "In the North-east corner of Lalitanandad *kunja*, there is a grove of Madhavi flowers that has the shape of an eight - petalled lotus. It is filled with many ingredients for Divine pastimes. In the north of Lalitanandad *kunja*, there is a flower grove called Sitambuja (white lotus). It is shaded by fully-bloomed Nagakesar flowers (*Mesua roxburghii*) whose trees are embraced by creepers of Prafulla Mallika (*Jasminum zambac*). Its middle portion is studded with moonstones, the seed-vessel is golden, the filaments are gem-filled. This flower-grove is surrounded by eight lotus-shaped *kunjas*. In this way, Lalita's *kunja* is surrounded in all eight directions by flower groves that are dearest to Radha - Krishna, and are so colorful and beautiful that they are the objects of admiration of one and all.

To the east of Lalita's grove, there is yet another beautiful grove called 'Asitambuja Kunja'. It is shaped as a blue-lotus. It is embraced by slender branches and surrounded by fully bloomed golden creepers. It is decorated with *Tamal* trees and studded with precious blue gems. It has a golden seed-vessel and it is surrounded by eight small groves that are lotus - shaped. To the south of Lalita's *kunja* there is another flower-grove called 'Arunambuja'. Its interiors and exteriors are made of rubies and it is shaded by fully bloomed clove creepers. To the west is Hemambuja that is shaded by fully bloomed Champaka trees and golden Champaka creepers. Its interior and exterior are golden.

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MADANA-SUKHADA-KUNJA : (The flower grove that gives pleasure to Madana, the god of love)

" *Prati-vidisam-udancac-champakananc-aturna- maruna - harita - pita - Shyama- puspocayanam. Vara - parimala - dhara krsiptu - gandhan-taranam prati-disam-adhirahan - madhavi - vestitanam. Vyatisumilita - tiryam-nirgataih kaiscid-anyai rupar-ighatita - sangaih snigdha sakha samuhaih, suka - pikam-adhupanam nila-pita-nunananam madhura - ninada - ramyai-schaditah saudhatulyah.*
73-74.

Meaning - " To the North-east of **Sri Radhakund**, there is a famous grove called 'Madanasukhada'. It belongs to Vishakha *sakhi*. It has four huge Champaka (*Michelia Champaka*) trees in all four corners. They bear red, green, yellow and dark colored flowers whose fragrance outdoes all other fragrances and keep everybody entertained. This grove is made attractive by blue, yellow and green colored melodious parrots, cuckoos and bees. Madhavi creepers embrace the curved branches of Champaka trees. Vishakha's grove is shaded by calm, peaceful trees and resembles a palace"

"*Sthala Jala - Janipuspai Pallavai Kalaptanana - Bharana - Vasana - Sayya - Sadvitanad Purnnah, Aruna - Visada - Pita - Shyama - Padmotpaladyai - Rdisividisi Sanalai Kalpitaneka Chitrah*" *75*

Meaning - "This flower - grove is adorned by terrestrial and aquatic flowers. It is complete with clothes, beds and canopies. It is decorated with a variety of lotuses such as red, white yellow and green. Beautiful flowers are strewn everywhere. "

"*Jathara-sarasa-lakaih palla vaisChitra puspai rghatita mrdukavati pravrtadvas-catuskah, madakala calabhrn-gahanikini - dvarapalo manicaya - citabhumi - dvyasta-patrabja- madhyah*" *76*

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Meaning - "In the middle, there are four small doors made of grass and twigs intertwined with leaves and a variety of flowers. Hoards of intoxicated bees are moving restlessly around these doors, as if guarding them. The center of the grove is shaped like a sixteen-petalled lotus and studded with gems."

"Vahirapi tata sakha-acchadita-bhih samanta chatasrbhirati bhabhirvestito dehatibhih, anisamiha visakha - sisyya manjumukeya racana nipunam-itya samskrto dhyak-sayasya. sivahariti tata-sthopyesa radha-vakare - rviharena - rasa-vany-aplavitatma samantat, madana-sukadanama locana-nandadhama vilasati sa visakha-nandadah kunjaraiah"

77-78

Meaning - "The exteriors are shaded by overspread branches and are fenced by four brilliant thresholds. Manjumukhi, the disciple of Vishakha, is the in-charge of this grove. She is an expert in drawing various pictures and is always engaged in the up-keep of this grove. Being situated in the corner of *Sri Radhakund*, which is verily the form of nectarine love, it is flooded with the nectar of Radha Krishna's dalliance. This kingly flower - grove of Visakha reigns as the bestower of supreme joy.

CHITRANANDAD-KUNJA (The Flower - grove causing pleasure to Chitra - Sakhi)

"Vichitra vrksa-vallibhis-citr-aratnais-citantaraih, Chitra-varnaih khagair-bhrngaih kuttimaih pranganair-vrtam. Chitramandapa - samyuktasChitra hindoli-kanvitah, Pracyam Chitranandadakhyah Schitrakunjo Virajate."

79-80

Meaning - "In the east of *Sri Radhakund* there exists a wonderfully strange grove called Chitranandad. Its middle portion is surrounded by strange trees and creepers having strange shapes and color, and strange gemstones. It is filled with birds, bees, benches and courtyards of strange colors. This grove is beautified by designed festive - booths and designed swings.

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INDULEKHA-ANANDAD-KUNJA : (The flower - grove causing pleasure to Indulekha - Sakhi).

Sphatikairindu kantaishca rcita kuttima catvarah, eitrita pundarikaisca kairavai-rmallika-adibhih Subhra-puspair--dalair-vrksari-vallibhisca samanvitah, subhra-lipika kiradyaih sabdagneyeyair-ninaditah. Subhravesam tu rakayam radhaKrishna sahalibhih krdantavapi neksyete kaiscid yatra gatairapi. Purnendu-nama kunjo yam-indulekha - sukhapradah, subhra-keli-talpadi ragneyam disi rajate."

81-84

Meaning - "In the south - east corner of *Sri Radhakund* lies Indulekha's grove, named 'Purnendu' (Full moon). Its floors and courtyards are made of quartz and moon stone. It is decorated with white flowers such as white lotus, white lily and jasmine. It is covered with white trees and creepers bearing white leaves and flowers. One can make out the difference between parrots, cuckoos and bees only by their sounds and not by their colors since they are all-white. When *Radha-Krishna* sport with the *sakhis* on a full moon night, all dressed in white, one would not notice them all of a sudden. This grove also contains a pure white bed for love-sports."

CHAMPAKALATA-ANANDAD KUNJA : (The flower-grove causing pleasure to Champakalata - sakhi.)

Hema-valli-vrtair--hema puspagaischadito - bhitah, hema-padma-vali citro hem-aprangana kuttimah. Hema -mandapika-yukto hema -hindolika-anuitah, hemavali - khagairyukto hema - lita paricchadah-Lidaya pitavasana pitalepa - vibhushana, yatra pravisto Sri Radha Krishnenapina laksyate. gaurangi vesadhrk Krishnah svapreyasya sahalibhih, srnoti prema-samlapam yatrai-tabhiraksitah-kadacit padmaya yatra prerita jatilagata, dadarsa Krishnam no raDham tenaika-sangamapi. svavarnakrt svasthitanam bhati kancana-bhuriva,

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daksine champakalataandado hema-kunjakah, gatra champakavallyah sa nikunja pakasalika, aste tadisayos Chitra - jagdhi-vedikayanvitaya Shyam paka-kriya-carya sa vrinda sa nijesayoh, sampadayati sammodat kadacit kunja-bhojanam.

85-92

Meaning - "In the south of *Sri Radhakund*, there exists a golden grove called 'Champakalata-anandad'. This grove is shaded with golden creepers and golden trees. It is decorated with golden lotuses. Its courtyard, pavements and everything else are all made of gold. The creepers, flowers, trees, compound, floors, festive - booths, swings, bees and all requirements of Divine sports are golden. When *Radharani* enters this grove, dressed in yellow, decorated with yellow ornaments, *Krishna* is unable to spot Her. Also, when *Krishna*, dressed up as *Radharani*, secretly listens to His beloved conversing lovingly with Her girl-friends, none of them is aware of His presence. Oh ! This grove has turned everything kept on its golden floor into golden color. Herein exists Champakalata's famous kitchen. There we can see the altar where *Radha-Krishna* partake of meals together. At certain times Champakalata, the preceptor of culinary art, joyously enables the *Divine Couple* to partake of meals, with the help of *Vrindadevi*."

85-92

RANGADEVI SUKHAPRAD KUNJA : (The flower - grove for the pleasure of Rangadevi sakhi)

"*Tamalaih Shyama-vallibhih slishta-sakhai-rdhrtantaram, indranila citabhyanta-rbhumikuttima-ca varah. Radhaya yugal-ibhavam gatopi mukharadi-bhih, neksyate harire-kaiva radhika yatra drsyate . Rajate disi nairtyam rangadevi sukhapradah, sarvaShyamah Shyama kunjoradhika rati-varadhanah.*"

93-95

Meaning - "In the south-west corner of *Sri Radhakund* there is a dark-blue flower grove called 'Rangadevi sukhaprad'. It is highly superior and enhances *Radharani's* passion. Its middle portion is

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studded with sapphire, covered with dark-blue creepers and is shaded by Tamala trees. Its quadrangles, pavements and everything else is decorated with sapphire. Due to this, even if old women such as Mukhara do enter this grove, they cannot spot *Krishna* united with *Radharani*. They are able to see only *Radharani*."

TUNGAVIDYA-ANANDAD KUNJA : (The flower grove for the pleasure of Tungavidya-Sakhi)

"Rakta vallivrtto rakta-puspa-patrair-drumai-rvrtah, sonaratna - citabhyantah kuttimangan - mandapah rakta hindolika - yuktah krishnestah sarvva lohitah, tungavidya-nandosti pascime runa kunjakah"
96-97

Meaning - "To the west of Sri Radhakund there is an red colored *kunja* called Tungavidya-anandad Kunja. It gives pleasure to Sri Krishna. It is surrounded by red colored creepers, red flowers and red leaves. It has benches, courtyards and festive-booths studded with rubies. It has red swings even! Everything in it is red."

SUDEVI SUKHADA KUNJA : (The flower - grove causing pleasure to Sudevi)

"Harid-valli-vrksa-Chitra harit-paksyali-samyutoah, harin-mani-citabhi-antara-bahya kittima-catvarah. Vayavyam sarva-harito radha-Krishnakso-kelibhuh, sudevi sukhadabhikhyo harit-kunjo virajate."
98-99

Meaning - "In the North - west corner of *Sri Radhakund* there is a green colored flower - grove belonging to Sudevi. Here the creepers, trees and birds are all green in color. Its interiors as well as exteriors such as pavements, quadrangles etc. are all studded with green gemstones. All articles in this grove are colored beautifully in a green hue. The *Divine Couple* plays the dice-game in this grove."

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SALILA KAMALA KUNJA : (The flower grove of water - lotus.)

"Upari lahari-tulyakara - Chitraih sphuradbhi - rmarakata - cayagar-bhaih puspa-ragendu kantaih, ghatit-mitaraloke toya-vadbhasamanam, manimaya - kumudia mbhojali - hamsa-adiyuklam. Dhanapati disi tadrk setu-bandhan-yuktam sadadhikadasa patramvhojavat sannivesam salilakamala sadmananga gunmanjari-sampradama-tula- sulavany-ollasa-lalasiti" *100-101*

Meaning - "In the middle of **Sri Radhakund** there is a floating flower-grove called 'Ananga manjari sukhada *kunja*'. It is studded with emeralds, rubies and moonstones. It has the shape of a sixteen-petalled lotus. It has a bridge in the north and is decorated with statues of lilies, lotuses, geese made of gems. On beholding this flower - grove one gets the feeling of wavelets playing on it. Since it floats on the water, it is called 'salila-kamala' or water - lotus."

"Sriradheva harestadiya - sarasi presthadbhutaih svairgunai - ryaShyam Sriyuta - madhavenduranisam premna tvaya kridati, premasmin vat radhikeva labhate yaShyam Sakrt snanakrtat - tasya mahima tatha madhurima kesastu varnyah kesastu varnyah ksitau" *102*

Meaning - "Just as **Sri Radha** is beloved to **Sri Krishna**, so is **Her Kunda** dearest to Him. Madhava, the moon of **Vraja**, always sports in it, being completely hypnotized by the wonderful qualities of **Sri Radhakund**. Whosoever bathes even once in **Sri Radhakund** gains a love for **Krishna** which is akin to that of **Radha**. Who in this creation is capable extolling the virtues of **Sri Radhakund** ? "

SRI SHYAMAKUND AND THE KUNJAS OF THE SAKHAS

"*Priyanarma-vayasya ye subalo madhumangalah, ujwalarjuna -
gandharva - vidagdha - bhrnga kokilahdaksa- sannandanadyasca
tesam svasva bhidhanvitah, tairvibhajyarpitah kunjaste
radhalalitadisu.*" *112-113*

Meaning - "Just like *Sri Radhakund*, *Sri Shyamakund* also has flower
- groves on its banks that belonged to dear *sakhas* such as Subala,
Madhumangala, Ujwala, Arjuna, Gandharva, Vidagdha, Bhrnga,
Kokila, Daksa, Sanandana etc. But they have given away their flower-
groves to the *sakhis*" *112-113*

"*Vayordisyasti subalanandad kunjasalika, radhayangikrta
yasyastirtham manasa-pavanam.. Nityam snatyatra salibhih
kundesmin vipulagraha, Krishna-padabja-madhvika paniye
Krishnavatpriye.*" *114-
115*

Meaning - "*Sri Radha* has accepted the flower-grove which is situated
at the North-west corner of *Shyamakund* and which belonged to
Subala-sakha. It is called '*Manasa-pavan*' (mentally purifying). *Sri
Radha* bathes here daily with Her *sakhis*, since its water tastes like the
nectar of the Lotus-Feet of *Krishna* and it is as dear to Her as is
Krishna Himself."

"*Lalitangi krtodicyam kunjasalati citrita, madhumangala-sandakhya
bhati Sri Radhika - priya. Visakhangi krtaisanyamujvala nandada
para, Evamanyasu dviksanya bhantanyabhih krtasryah.. purva-
pascima- dinmargavisesa Kundayoh kramat, vistirnaurnr pasvnam
stah snana - panartha tirthagau.*" *116-118*

Meaning - "To the north of *Sri Shyamakund* there is a flower-grove
named '*Madhu-mangala-anandad*'. It is most wonderful, very much

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dear to *Radharani* and has been accepted by *Lalita*. *Visakha* has accepted '*Ujwal-anandad*' (Brilliant and pleasing) flower grove, situated in the northeast. Likewise the groves situated in all other directions that belonged to *sakhas* such as *Arjuna* have been accepted by *sakhis* such as *Chitra*. To the east of *Shyamakund* and west of *Radha Kund* there are two broad paths for bathing and drinking."

"Lilnukulesu janesu cittesut panna - bhavesu sadhakanam, evamviDham sarvamidam cakasti svarupatah prakrtavat paresu".

119

Meaning - "In the meditative hearts of eternal devotees and practicing devotees the twin *Kundas* reveal themselves in their transcendental forms according to the requirements of the *Divine* pastimes. However, to all other people, they appear mundane."

THE APPEARANCE OF THE TWIN KUNDAS

Sri Radhakund – *Shyamakund*, the crest jewel of *Vraja*, the topmost pilgrimage center, the eternal *Divine* abode is eternally existent. However, the twin *Kundas* had appeared in a very interesting way during the pastimes of Lord *Krishna* on this earth. This has been described in *Varahapurana*. In '*Govardhan Parikrama*' of *Adivaraha*, it has been stated as follows:

"Gangayascottaram gatva devadevasya eakrinah, aristena samam yatra mahad yuddham pravartitam, ghatayitva tatastasminnArishtam vrisharupinam, kopena parsnighatena mahyastirtham prakalpitam."

Vrishabhashya vadho gneya atmanah! Suddhimicchita snatastatra tada krishno vrishamhatva sapopakah. Vipapmaradham provaca katham bhadre bhavisyasi, vrsohato maya cayamArishtah

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*papasuchakah tatra radha samaslisya Krishnaklishtakarinaṁ,
svanamna viditam Kundam kṛtam tirthamadurataḥ, Sri
Radhakundamiti khyatam sarvapapaharam subham"*

Meaning : -"There was a terrific battle between *Krishna*, the Lord of Lords and the demon *Arishtasura*, in the north of *Manasaganga*. *Arishtasura* was in the form of a bull. Since He had killed a bull, *Krishna* wished to purify Himself. Hence He revealed a great holy place (*Shyamakund*) by striking in anger on the earth with His left heel. He entered this *Kunda* with His friends and thus purified Himself.

After two or three *dandas* (1 danda = 24 minutes) He attracted *Radharani* along with Her companions for *Rasa* dance. He spoke thus – “ Dear one! Having killed *Arishtasura* I have purified Myself by revealing this great holy place. But the sin of killing a bull has entered You all as well, since You too belong to this place. How do You intend becoming pure?” Hearing this, *Radharani* embraced the One who is capable of performing many difficult tasks such as killing a demon with great ease, and created a lake which is greatly sacred, most attractive, capable of washing all sins and it is famous in the universe as ‘ *Sri Radhakund*’.

Srila Vishwanatha Chakravarti was a most delightful poet. In the purport to verse no 10.36.15 of *Srimad Bhagavatam*, he has very sweetly described the subtle mirth that took place after the deliverance of *Arishtasura*. In this he also mentions the appearance of *Radha- Shyamakund*. *Sri Radha* and Her *sakhis* such as *Lalita* were conversing as follows -

“ In spite of being the son of the king of cow herds (*Nanda Maharaj*), he has killed a bull. The scriptures state that – ‘A sin committed by the king contaminates his subjects as well’. According to this law, we too have become contaminated. Now we shall never survive if we do

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not take steps for repentance. Let us approach Paurnamasi who is a pious lady. She will show us some way to get out of this problem."

These words were stated loud enough so as to enable Krishna to overhear them. Then the following conversation took place.

Radha - "You killer of a bull! Do not dare to touch us!"

Krishna - " You silly *gopis* ! How can you forget that he was a demon out to destroy the entire *Vraja*?"

Radha - " All the same *Krishna*, he belonged to the bovine species. On killing *Vrtrasura*, *Indra* had become sinful since *Vrtrasura* was a Brahmin. In the same way, you too have to suffer."

Hearing this *Krishna* kept mum. Then with a pale face He prayed ardently - "Is there no way out for Me?" *Radha* and Her *sakhis* replied - "Look here, You have to do according to what great people such as *Paurnamasi*, *Gargi* etc. have said. That is, You will have to bathe in the holy waters of the entire universe. Then alone will this heinous sin be washed off."

Hearing this *Krishna* shed off his modesty and retorted - " Hmph ! How dare you suggest me to go around the universe? Behold how I bring all holy places right here and now. Then I shall bathe therein." Saying thus, he struck the earth forcefully with his left heel. Immediately, *Bhogavati Ganga* appeared from deep underground. *Krishna* becked all holy places to join this water and they obeyed. *Krishna* told the *gopis* proudly -----

"Tirthani pasyata harrvacasa tavaivam naiva pratima iti ta atha tirthavaryah, procuh krtanjaliputa lavanabdhirasmi ksirabdhirasmi srnutamaradiraghikasmi Sonosmi sindhurasmi bhavami tamra- parni ca puskaramanca sarasvati ca godavari ravisuta sarayuh prayago revasmi pasyata kuruta pratitim"

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Which means : “ O foolish Gopis ! Behold all the holy places unified.” Hearing this, the gopis said – “ We refuse to believe what you say! ” Then all the holy places arose with folded palms and spoke up – “I am Dead Sea” “I am the ocean of milk” “I am river Suradirghika” “I am Saraswati” “I am Godavari” “I am Yamuna” “I am Sarayu” “I am Prayag” “I am Reva” “ Behold our waters and have faith in what we say”.

"Snata tato harirati prajagalbha eva suddhah saro pyakaravam sthita sarvatirtham, yusmabhiratmajamanumiha krto no dharmah kopi ksitavatha sakhirnijagada radha"

Meaning - "Krishna then bathed in the waters of all the holy places and declared proudly—' I will see to it that all these holy places reside eternally in this pure take. You people have not performed a single pious activity in all your lives.' "

Hearing this, Radharani looked at Her *sakhis* and said—

"karyam mayapyati – manohara – Kundam ekam tasmad atadhvamiti tad vacanena tabhii, Sri Krishna Kunda tata paschima diShyamando gartah krto vrishabha daitya – khurai-rvyaloki. Tatra-rdramrnmrdula-golatatih prati sava- hastodvrta anati-dur-agata vidhaya divyam sarah prakatitam ghatika dvayena tabhi-rvilokya sarasam smarate sma Krishnah"

Meaning - “ Dear friends! We ought to create an attractive take as well. Everyone should strive for the same.” Hearing this the *sakhis* selected a spot in the West Side of *Shyamakund*. They saw a big hole dug by the bull – demon’s hoof. They started taking out balls of soft, wet mud from there and throwing them far. Within a very short time a *Divine* lake was revealed. Seeing this *Krishna* was astonished and told *Radharani*---

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"Proce ca tirthasalilaih parip tirayitat mat Kundatah sarasijaksi sahalibhishtam radha tada nanananeti jagad yasmat tvat Kunda niramurugovadha pa pakaktam. Ahrtiya punya salilalam satakotikumbhaih sakhyarbudena saha mamasajahnnavitah, etat sarah svamadhuna paripurayami tenaiva kietimtulam tanavani loke."

Meaning - " O lotus – eyed damsel ! You may fill Your *Kunda* with the water of all holy places present in my lake."

Radharani, screwing up Her nose and mouth, protested vehemently – "No , Not , Never ! Your *Kunda* is filled with the sin of cow – killing. A million of my *sakhis* will carry hundreds of crores of pitchers and fill this *Kunda* with water from *Manasaganga*. Its fame will be unsurpassed in the universe. "

"*Krishnengitena sahasaitya samasta tirtha sanghastadi yasarasodhrta - divyamurtih, tustava tatra vrishabhamusutam pranama bhaktya krtanjaliputah sravadasradharah. "*

Meaning - "Then, as per *Krishna*'s indications, all holy places, stood up suddenly, assuming *Divine* forms. They paid obeisances to *Radharani* and glorified Her devoutly with tear- filled eyes-----

"*Devi tvadiyamahimanamavaiti sarva shastrarthavinna ca vidhir na haro na laksmih, kintveeka eva purushartha siromanishtat prasveda marjanaparah svayameva Krishnah. "*

Meaning - "O Goddess! Even the most learned ones do not know your greatness. *Brahma*, *Siva* and *Narada* know not the bounds. *Uddhava* fumbles in mind. A chip of Whose toe-nail spreads brilliance of beauty desired every moment by *Laxmi* ! Your greatness is known to *Krishna* alone, who wipes Your perspiration".

"*Yas-caru-yavaka-rasena bhavat padabjam-arajya nupuramaho nidadhati nityam, prapya tadiya nayanabja-tata-prasadam swam*

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*manyateama-dhanya-tamam-prahrasyan. Tasyajnayaiva sahasa
vayamajagama tatparsnaghatakṛta Kundavare vasamah. Tancet
prasidasi karosi kripakataksam tarhyeva tarsa vitapi phalito
bhavannah".*

Meaning – “Lord Krishna decorates Your Lotus-Feet with lac dye in so many various moods. He adorns Your lotus feet with gem studded anklets and gazes at Your face. He considers Himself fortunate if He can gain the mercy of even Your side-long glance. It is His merciful command that has brought us here in this great lake.

"O Goddess ! If You cast Your merciful gaze on us even once and accept us, our parched hearts will be quenched and we will live here in order to behold Your beautiful pastimes"

*"Srutva stutim nikhila-tirtha-ganasya tusta prahṇa sma tarsmayi
vedayateti radha, yama tvadiya sarasim saphala bhavama ityeva no
vara iti prakatam tadocuh".*

Meaning – “When the merciful daughter of Sri Vrishabhanu heard the glorifying prayers of the holy places, She was satisfied and said --

“What do you desire?"

Then the holy places replied ----"We wish to enter Your lake and make our names worth while. Please grant us this boon".

*"Agacchateti vrishabhanusuta smitasya provaca kanta-vadanabja-
dhrtakṣi-kona, sakhyo'pi tatra kṛta sammatayah sukhabdhou magna
virejurakhila sthira-jangamasca".*

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Meaning – “When Sri Vrishabhanu-nandini (the daughter of King Vrishabhanu) heard this, She cast a meaningful side-long glance at Her paramour and said – ‘If this is so, you are welcomed’.

The *sakhis* too agreed with Srimati. And all the movable as well as immovable objects got immersed in the ocean of happiness and looked beautiful.”

“Prapya prasadamatha te vrishabhanujayah Sri Krishna-Kundagata-tirtha-varah prasahya, bhittyaiva bhittimativegata eva Sri Radhakundam vyadhuh swasalilaih paripurnameva”.

Meaning – “Having obtained the mercy of Sri Vrishabhanu-nandini, the great holy places present in *Sri Krishnakund* most joyously and speedily pierced the wall separating the *Kundas* and filled *Sri Radhakund* with their waters”.

“Proceh harih priyatame tava Kundam etat mat-Kundato’pi mahimam-adhikam astu loke, atraivame salila-kelih-ihaiya nityam snanam yathe tvamasi tadvadidam saro me”.

Meaning – “Then Sri Krishna spoke thus to Sri Radha --‘O dearest one! May Your *Kunda* be more glorious than Mine! I shall bathe and sport daily in Your *Kunda*. I love it as much as I love You.”

“Radha bravidam-api swa-sakhibhih-etya snaShyami-Arishtamardana-sarasi-uru-bhaktih-atra snayad-vasen-mama sa eva maha-priyo ’stu”.

Meaning – “Hearing these words of Sri Krishna, Srimati said – ‘I too shall bathe daily in Your *Kunda* with all My *sakhis*. Whoever bathes devoutly in this *Kunda* and lives on its banks, all his sins will be destroyed and he will be very dear to Me.”

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"raasotsavam prakurute sma tatra ratrau Krishnambudah krtamaha-rasa-harsa-varsah, Sri radhika pravara-vidyu-dalam kta Srih-trailokya-madhya-vitati kta divya-kirtih".

Meaning - "With this, Their conversation came to an end. That very night the cloud – complexioned Krishna united with the lightning colored Sri Radha and showered torrents of joy all around while celebrating the *Raas* festival. In this way They spread the immense glory of the *Kundas* in the three worlds."

SRI SRI RADHAKUNDASHTAKAM

(An ode to Sri Radhakund)

Srimat Raghunathdas Goswami, who is a dear associate of *Srimanmahaprabhu* has thus described the wonderful glory of *Sri Radhakund* in his *Sri Radhakundstakam*—

"Vrishabhanujan-asan-narma-dharmokti-rangaih nikhila nija sakhibhih yat swa hastena purnam, pratititam api vrindaranya-rajna pramodaih-tada-ati-surabhi radhakundam-eva-asrayo me".1.

Meaning - "After *Vrishasura* was killed, Sri Radharani jested with Sri Krishna and spread mirth all around. She personally along with thousands and thousands of Her friends, dug up the earth and most blissfully manifested Sri Radhakund. May that most beautiful Sri Radhakund be my only shelter!"

"Vrajabhuvi murasatroh preyasnam nikamaih-asulabham-api turnam premakalpadrumam tam, janayati hrdis bhumau snaturuccaihi priyam yastada- ati- surabh-radhakundam-eva-asrayo me".2.

Meaning - "The wish-fulfilling tree that is most inaccessible to *Vrajavasis*, and even to the beloveds of Sri Krishna (the *sakhis* and

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manjaris) who are full of *madhura bhava*, is manifested suddenly in the heart of one who bathes in Sri Radhakund. May that most beautiful Sri Radhakund be my only shelter!"

"Aghari-ripu yatnat-atra devyah prasada-prasara-kṛta-kataksa-praptikamah prakamam, anusarati yaduccaiḥ snana-savanubandhaiḥ tad-ati - surabh-radhakundam-eva-asrayo me".3

Meaning - "What to speak of others, even Sri Krishna, the killer of demon Agha, owes allegiance to Sri Radhakund and bathes in it and serves it. He does so in order to obtain just one glance of pleasure from the sulking Radharani. May that most beautiful Sri Radhakund be my only shelter!"

"Vrajabhuvana sudhamsoḥ premabhumir-nirmikamam vraja-madhura-kisori maulli-ratna-priyaiva, paricitam-api namna yacca tenaiva tasyah tada- ati - surabh-radhakundam-eva-asrayo me"4.

Meaning - "Sri Radharani, the sweet *kisori* of Vraja, is the crest-jewel of all Vraja-beauties. Sri Krishna loves Her the most. Sri Krishna loves Sri Radhakund that is named after Sri Radha, as much as He loves Radharani. May that most beautiful Sri Radhakund be my only shelter!"

"Api jana iha kascit yasya seva prasadaih pranaya sura lata syat tasya gosthendra-sunoh, sapadi kila madisa dasya puspa-prasasyah tad-ati - surabh-radhakundam-eva-asrayo me".5.

Meaning - "Even a most unqualified and worthless person can obtain the mercy of Sri Radhakund simply by serving it, viz., living on its banks, bathing in it, beholding it, touching it and worshipping it. By its mercy, the wish-fulfilling creeper of Sri Krishna-prema decorated with the blossoms of servitude to Sri Radharani, Who is my Mistress, sprouts very quickly. May that most beautiful Sri Radhakund be my only shelter!"

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"Tata madhura nikunjah kaliptanamana uccaih nija parijsaan vargaih samvibhajyasritastah, madhukara-rutaramya yasya rajanti kamyah tada-ati - surabh-radhakundam-eva-asrayo me".6.

Meaning - "Sri Radhakund is surrounded by flower-groves that are named after Sri Radharani's dear *sakhis*. These groves are the excitant causes of the love-sports of the Divine Couple. They are attractive with the buzzing of bees. May that most beautiful Sri Radhakund be my only shelter!"

"Tata bhuvi varavedyam yasya narmati hrdayam madhura madhura vartam gostha chandrasya bhangya, prathayati mitha isa prana sakhyalibhih sa tada-ati - surabh-radhakundam-eva-asrayo me".7.

Meaning - "Sri Radharani sits on attractive gem-studded benches on the banks of Sri Radhakund and converses most sweetly with Her *sakhis* about the pastimes of Sri Krishna. May that most beautiful Sri Radhakund be my only shelter!"

"Anudinam-ati-rangaih prema-mattali-sanghah vara-sara-sija gandhair-hari vari-prapurne, viharata iha yasmin dampati tau pramattau tada-ati - surabh-radhakundam-eva-asrayoning - "

Meaning - "Sri Sri Radha-Madhava, intoxicated with conjugal sports, always stroll with the *sakhis* who are intoxicated with the love of the Divine Couple, on the banks of Sri Radhakund, whose love filled water is ever fragrant with lotus flowers. May that most beautiful Sri Radhakund be my only shelter!"

"Avikalam-atir-devyascaru kundastam yah paripatahti atdiyollasi-dasyarpitatma, aciramiha sarire darsayatyeva tasmai madhuripu-rati-modayih sliShyamanam priyam tam".9.

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Meaning - "If one who is surrendered to Sri Radha's servitude reads this attractive Sri Radhakundashtakam enthusiastically and patiently, Lord Krishna, Who is the slayer of the demon Madhu, will give him *darshan* along with Radharani in His arms, while he (the devotee) is still in his *sadhaka*-body."

SRI RADHAKUND - THE CREST-JEWEL OF VRAJA

Sripad Raghunatha das Goswami has stated that Sri Radhakund is the greatest place in Vraja. He has glorified Sri Radhakund in the following manner -

*"Sri vrnvipinam suramyamapitacchriman sa govardhanah sa
arsasthali-akpi-alam rasamayi kim tavad anya sthalam, yasyapi-
amsa-lavena narhati manak samyam mukundasya tat pranebhyo-ati-
adhika-priyeva dayitam tat kundam-eva-asraye."*

Meaning - "What to speak of other places? Even the supremely beautiful Sri Vrindavan, most decorated Sri Govardhan and supremely *rasa*-filled Sri Rasasthali (where the *Rasa* dance takes place) is nowhere compared to a tiny fraction of Sri Radhakund. Sri Mukunda (Krishna) loves it as much as He loves Sri Radha Who is dearer than His life to Him. May Sri Radhakund always be my shelter!"

*"Donhara ujjwala madhura ye 'rasa' varna-viparyay kari,
rahasya lagiya bhakte sukh diya ache 'sara' nam dhari.
Se karan bhakta 'sara' kari vyakta se rase kariya snan,
Krishner kripay radha-sama prem labh kare bhagyavan.
Sri Krishna yakhan radha darashan lagi utkonthita hay,
Sakal upay biphal haiya radhakundashray loy,
Tatkale radhar pay darahsan emati kunda-prabhav,
Radhar emati Shyama-kund-ashraye Krishna sanga hoy labh."*

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Meaning - "The brilliant sweet '*rasa*' (mellow) of the Divine couple have assumed the form of '*sara*' (lake) in order to give pleasure to the devotees. Hence the devotees dive into that '*sara*' and bathe in the '*rasa*'. In this manner, by Krishna's mercy, the fortunate ones gain a *prema* that is similar to that possessed by Radharani. When Lord Krishna is anxious to behold Radharani, and all other means fail, He seeks the shelter of Radhakund. The *kund* is so powerful that immediately He gets Her *darshan*. In the same way Shyamakund enables Radharani to gain the association of Lord Krishna."

On the Appearance Day of Sri Kundas and on special festivals, devotees circumambulate the Kundas, singing the following hymn -

*"Jaya sri lalitakunda jaya Shyamakunda,
jaya jaya radhakunda pratape prachanda. 1.
(Chorus - Jaya jaya radhakunda, jaya jaya Shyamakunda,
amar jibane marane gati)*

*Kundera mahima kichhu shuno bhakatgan,
Puranadi shastramate bhashay likhan. 2.*

(Repeat chorus)

*Kundera mahima sindhu ananta apar,
Aja-bhava adi shesha nahi pay par. 3.*

(Repeat chorus)

*Khudra jib ki koribo tahara barnan,
Dig darashan matra koriye likhan. 4.*

(Repeat chorus)

*Vaikuntha hoite shrehtha hoy madhupuri,
janmalila pratatila apani sri hari. 5.*

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(Repeat chorus)

*Madhupuri haite srestha hoy vrindavan,
Raasotsab koilo yaha loiya gopigan. 6.*

(Repeat chorus)

*Bhagabate suprasiddha sri shuka bharati,
Brahmar darashan vrindavaner bibhuti. 7.*

(Repeat chorus)

*Ekdehse ananta vaikuntha vishnudham,
Hena vrindaban dhamer ke kare upam. 8.*

(Repeat chorus)

*Vrnadaban madhye shrehstha hon giriraj,
Yar dara koilo Krishna goshta raksha kaj. 9.*

(Repeat chorus)

*Govardhan madhye radhakunda sarvottam,
Krishna-prem paripurno Krishna manoram. 10.*

(Repeat chorus)

*Krishna-priya madhye srestha vraja-gopigan,
Yanr pada-dhuli kore uddhab prarthan. 11.*

(Repeat chorus)

*Braja-gopi-gan madhye srestha radha thakurani,
Sarba-guna-khani-Krishna-kanta-shiromani. 12.*

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(Repeat chorus)

*Jaichhe Krishna priya radhakunda taichhe tanr,
Kunder mahima borne aichhe shakti kar. 13*

(Repeat chorus)

*Kunder madhuri jena radha madhurima,
Hena jan nahi je korite pare sima. 14.*

(Repeat chorus)

*Ei kunde nitya Krishna radhikara sange,
Jale jalakeli kore tire rasa range. 15.*

(Repeat chorus)

*Ei kunde ekbar jeba kore snan,
Radha sama prem tare Krishna kore dan. 16.*

(Repeat chorus)

*Giriraj tate radhakunda suprakash,
Ke hena bibeki tahe nahi kore vas. 17.*

(Repeat chorus)

*Gouranga charana padma bhrnga raghunatha
Radhakunda vasi nam jagata vikhyata. 18.*

(Repeat chorus)

*Raghunath daser sambandha laba lese,
Yadyapi ayogya tobu kori abhilase. 19.*

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(Repeat chorus)

*Ei mora vasasthan ei mora sthiti,
Sri kunda vihane mora ara nahi gati.20.*

(Repeat chorus)

*Akinchana bhrtya citta ei abhilasha,
Janme janme radhakunda tire hoy vasa.21.*

(Repeat chorus)

*Jayati Sri kunda tomar ishwari ishwar,
Tuya tire nire vas kore nirantar.22.*

(Repeat chorus)

*Duhkhita janara suno ek nibedan,
Ekbar koruna kori dekhao charan.23.*

(Repeat chorus)

*Kunda tir vas ar kundera sevan,
Korile ke nahi hoy kripara bhajan.24.*

(Repeat chorus)

*Dante trna dhori kohe dina Krishna das,
Nija gune dasi koro ei abhilash.25.*

(Repeat chorus)

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Meaning -

"Glory be to Sri Lalitakund!

Glory be to Shyamakund!

Glory be! Glory be!

To the most powerful Radhakund! (1)

(Chorus - Glory be glory be to Radhakund Shyamakund,
Who are my only repose in life and death.)

O Devotees! The kunds are great, please hear!
To this all scriptures testimony doth bear.(2). Glory be.....

The kunds are infinitely great, that it is true,
No demi-god has absolutely any clue.(3). Glory be.....

This *jiva* is much too small,
And cannot describe it all.(4). Glory be.....

Greater than Vaikunth is Madhupuri,
Since here appeared Sri Hari.(5). Glory be.....

Greater than Madhupuri, Vrindavan is,
The Raas-dance occurred here with Gopis.(6). Glory be.....

In Bhagavata Sri Shuka has made it renown,
Brahma's *darshan* of opulent Vrindavan.(7). Glory be.....

Who can extol the opulence of Vrindavan,
That has countless Vaikuntha *Vishnudham*.(8). Glory be.....

There Giriraj is greatest, everybody knows
Whom Krishna used, to protect His cows.(9). Glory be.....

In Govardhan, Radhakund is supreme,

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Filled with Krishna-prem till the brim.(10). Glory be.....

In all Krishna-beloveds the Gopis reign high
For the dust of their feet does Uddhava cry.(11). Glory be.....

Of all the Gopis, you know very well,
That our Radharani is the crest-jewel.(12). Glory be.....

Radhakund is most loved by Krishna, 'tis true
Who can extol Radhakund's virtue? (13). Glory be.....

Like Radharani, Her kund too is as sweet,
There is none who can measure its limit.(14). Glory be.....

Here Radha-Krishna have water-fights,
And dance the Raas all night.(15). Glory be.....

If you bathe even once in this water pure,
You'll gain a love akin to that of Radha, that's sure! (16). Glory be.....

At the foothills of Giriraj is Radhakund, my dear!
Who would not love to live here?(17). Glory be.....

Raghunatha, absorbed in Gouranga, ye all harken!
Beacame famous as a Radhakund-citizen.1(8). Glory be.....

Although unqualified, yet I do pray
To be linked with Raghunatha in some way.(19). Glory be.....

This is my home, here I stay,
Other than Radhakund there is no way.(20). Glory be.....

I have no desire other than one,
In every birth may I live in Radhakund alone.(21) Glory be.....

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Glory be to Divine Couple! Glory be to thee!
On your banks may I forever be.(22). Glory be.....

I pray with a heart full of sorrows untold,
That I may once Thy lotus feet behold.(23). Glory be.....

Who will serve the Kund and here remain,
The Divine Couples' mercy he'll surely gain.(24). Glory be.....

The lowly Krishna das has a humble prayer—
"Make me Your maidservant, 'tis all I desire". (25). Glory be.....

HOW THE PLACES OF THE DIVINE PASTIMES WERE NAMED

When *Sri Krishna* was visible on the earth, Sri kund too existed in their original forms, i.e, one could see the gem-studded banks, wish-fulfilling trees etc. When *Sri Krishna* disappeared, *Sri Dham* too concealed its original form. After the completion of Dvaraka – lila, and the disappearance of the Yadu dynasty, Lord *Krishna's* great grandson Vajranabha had come to Hastinapura along with his mother Ushadevi.

Before the great departure of the Pandavas, Emperor Yudhisthira had crowned Vajranabha the King of Mathura *mandal*. Emperor Yudhisthira ordered Vajranabha to manifest the places of *Sri Krishna's* pastimes in Mathura *mandal*. Vajra roamed all over Vraja *mandal* but could not find any sign of Divine pastimes. He sat sorrowfully on the banks of the Yamuna and started weeping. Then the trees of *Sri Dham* introduced him to the places of the Divine

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pastimes. Vajra had already heard the pastimes of *Sri Krishna* from his mother Ushadevi. Now as directed by the trees, he visited all the places and named them accordingly. Till date, the same names are used. Sri Vajra also built various *Kundas*. They are famous as Vajra *Kunda*.

Hearing about the beauty of *Sri Krishna* from mother Ushadevi, Sri Vajra also sculpted the Deities of *Sri Govinda*, *Sri Madanmohan*, *Sri Gopinath*, *Sri Kesavdev*, *Sri Haridev*, *Sri Gopaladev* (*Srinathji*), *Sri Saksigopala*, *Sri Vrindadevi*, *Sri Mahadev* etc. Of these, *Sri Govinda* resembled Lord *Krishna* so much that Ushadevi pulled her veil on beholding Him.

Sri Vajra established a *Kunda* where *Sri Krishna* had killed *Arishtasura* and named the place 'Arishta'. This is how the village got the name "Arisht". This name existed till the British era. At present this village is named '*Sri Radhakund*'.

THE DISCOVERY OF THE KUNDAS

Srimanmadhuprabhu arrived at *Sri Vrindavan* via *Jharkhand* approximately during the reign of the Pathan king *Sikandar Lodhi*. Accompanied by *Sri Krishnadas Rajput*, the Lord circumambulated the *Vraja* mandal replete with its twelve forests such as *Vrindavan*, *Madhuvan*, *Talavan*, *Kumudvan* etc. His arrival at *Sri Radhakund* and the discovery of the lost *Kundas* is described nicely in *Sri Chaitanya Charitamrita* (*Madhya*. 18th ch).

"*Ei moto mahaprabhu nachite nachite,
Arit grame ashi bahya hoilo achambite.
Arite radhakunda varta puchhe lokasthane,
Keho nahi kohe sanger brahman nahi jane.
Tirtha lupta jani prabhu sarvajna bhagavan,
Dui dhanya ksetre alpa jale koilo snan.*"

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*Dekhi sab gram loker vismay hoilo man,
Preme prabhu kore radhakunder stavan---
Sab gopi hoite radha krishnera preyasi,
Taichhe radhakunda priya --- priyar sarasi."*

Meaning - "In this way, *Mahaprabhu* arrived, dancing in ecstasy. He suddenly came to His external senses when He reached the village of Arit. He asked the people the whereabouts of *Sri Radhakund*. They did not know. The Brahmins accompanying Him also knew nothing. The all-knowing Lord understood that the *tirtha* was lost. He bathed in the little water that had collected in between two paddy fields. All the villagers were surprised to see this. Filled with love, the Lord glorified *Sri Radhakund* - 'Amongst all the Gopis, *Radharani* is the dearmost to *Krishna*. In the same way Her lake is also most beloved to Him".

It is also mentioned in Padma Purana, Laghu-bhagavata-mritam, Uttara khanda, ---45---

"Yatha radha priya vishnostasyah kundam priyam tatha,sarva gopisu sevaika vishnor-atyanta-vallabha."

Meaning - "'Amongst all the Gopis, *Radharani* is the dearmost to *Krishna*. In the same way Her lake is also most beloved to Him".

*"Sei kunde Krishna nitya Radhikara sange,
jale jalakeli kore ,--tire rasa range.
Sei kunde jei ekbar kore snan,
tare radha sama prem Krishna kore dan.
Kunder madhuri yena radhar madhurima,
Kunder mahima yena radhar mahima.*

.....
*Eimoto stuti kore premavishta haiya,
Tire nritya kore kundalila smanariya.
Kunder mrittika laiya tilak korilo,
Bhattacharya dwara mrittika sange kori loilo."*

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Meaning --(Sri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu glorified Sri Radhakund in the following manner)-- "*Krishna* sports daily with Radhika in this *Kunda*, and celebrates Rasa dance on its banks.

*Radhakund is as sweet as Radha,
Radhakund is as glorious as Radha.
My dear devotees, pray
Listen to Lord Krishna say-*

*"Whoever bathes even once in
This Kund so pure,
I grant him Radha-like love,
That's for sure!"*

In this manner, filled with love, the Lord glorified *Sri Radhakund*. He danced on its banks by remembering the Divine pastimes enacted therein. He donned *tilaka* with the earth of *Sri Radhakund* and asked Bhattacharya to carry some earth along with him."

From the above description, it is very clear that when *Srimanmahaprabhu* had arrived in Vraja, *Sri Radhakund* and Shyamakund were in the form of paddy fields and no one knew that they were such great holy places.

There is a common proverb---"The wealth of Bengal lies in Vrindavan". Hence it is natural for any curious person (especially if he is a Bengali) to investigate how this national wealth was discovered by the far away Bengali Vaishnavas. In the sixteenth century, the arrival of Prema-purushottama *Srimanmahaprabhu* had flooded the entire country with the elated waves of His ocean of love. One of His permanent gifts was the re-establishment of *Sri Vrajmandal*. Hence *Sri Radhakund*, the crest jewel of *Sri Vrajmandal* is a most lovable and glorious place for the Gaudiya Vaishnavas. We would like to

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present a short description of the glorious history of *Sri Radhakund* right from the ancient times to the present day. To delve in to this, we will first have to learn the history of the entire Vrajamandal in short, since *Sri Vrindavan*, *Mathura* and *Sri Radhakund* are all connected with each other and the facts regarding them cannot be viewed separately.

THE APPEARANCE OF SRI MATHURA

The city of Mathura belonged to none other than the Supreme Personality of Godhead, *Lila-purushottama Sri Krishna*. The appearance of *Sri Mathura* is described in *Sri Ramayana* in the following manner —

There was a demon called Madhu. He performed *tapasya* of Lord Siva and obtained a trident from him. Due to this he became extremely powerful. The demon Madhu built the city of Mathura in what is now known as Madhuvan. When Lavanasura, the son of Madhu started torturing the Brahmins and the demi-gods, Lord Rama instructed his younger brother Shatrughna to kill him. Satrughna killed Lavanasura in a battle and acquired Madhupuri (Mathura). Mathura was a part of the province called Surasena. It is written in *Sri Harivamsha* that Haryasva of the Ikshvaku clan married Madhumati, the daughter of the demon Madhu, and established his capital in Govardhan. According to *Srimad Bhagavatam*, Haryasva is the eleventh descendent of Ikshvaku.

From the *Mahabharata* we learn, that in the latter years, the powerful kings of the Yadu dynasty ruled over the province of Surasena. Later on, the tyrant Kamsa dethroned his father Ugrasena and assumed the position of a king. It is during the reign of Kamsa that Lord *Krishna* appeared as the son of Vasudeva who was married to Kamsa's sister

Devaki. During the marriage of Devaki and Vasudeva, there was a Divine prophecy that the eighth child of Devaki would kill Kamsa.

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Frightened by this, Kamsa threw Devaki and Vasudeva in the gaol and killed their children born prior to *Krishna*. When Lord *Krishna* appeared, Vasudeva was afraid that Kamsa would kill Him too. Hence he crossed the Yamuna at midnight and secretly placed the baby in Nanda Maharaj's home since Nanda was his bosom friend. It is evident from various scriptures and the Mahajananas too have stated that Nanda and Yashoda had begot twin children at the very same time. The son was none other than the Supreme Personality of Godhead Lord *Krishna* and the daughter was Mahamaya. Due to the spell of Mahamaya, Vasudeva had not noticed the boy. He exchanged his son with the daughter and returned to the gaol. There the son of Vasudeva merged with Yashoda's son Who is the original form of Sri Bhagawan. This original form Nanda-nandan (Son of Nanda) is the One who enacted various sweeter than sweet pastimes in Sri Vrindavan for eleven years. We have already stated how He revealed *Sri Radhakund* and Shyamakund in the midnight of the month of Kartika after killing Arishtasura. Srila Vishwanath Chakravartipad in his purport to Adivaraha Purana and Sri Harivamsha has described this incident.

After this, Lord *Krishna* arrived at Mathura, killed Kamsa and once again established King Ugrasena on the throne. Thereafter He lived in Mathura for five years (some say, for nine years). Later on, fed up of the repeated attacks by King Jarasandha, He built the city of Dwaraka far away amidst the Arabian Sea. He lived there for a hundred years with other members of the Yadu family. After killing Sisupala and before the Pandavas departed to the forest, *Sri Krishna* killed Dantavakra in a place called 'Datiha'. Then He came once more to Vraja and stayed here for two months. Thereafter He disappeared into the unmanifested pastimes along with His eternal associates-- the Brajavasis. He went to Dwaraka in a different 'Prakasha' (Divine form). At the end of Dwaraka pastimes, He made the Yadu clan disappear under the pretext of 'maushala-lila' and then He disappeared.

THE RISE AND FALL OF JAINISM AND BUDDHISM

After the Kurukshetra war, the power of the Kshatriyas decreased so much that the entire country was divided into many small kingdoms and their history is unavailable. All the tiny princely states were embroiled in daily looting and murdering of each other. There was total chaos and lawlessness all around. Amidst this terrible state of affairs you can well imagine how difficult it must have been for the faraway Gaudiya Vaishnavas who lived in abject poverty to come all the way to Mathura and reinstate the holy places. In order to appreciate their efforts we need to know a brief history of their struggle.

The scriptures say that Kaliyuga started since the disappearance of *Sri Krishna*. Thereafter Hindu religion suffered a gradual fall down. Simultaneously there was a rise of Jainism followed by Buddhism. Mahavira who was the twentyfourth and last tirthankar (Spiritual Master) of the Jains disappeared in 526 BC while Lord Buddha disappeared in 477 BC. During the third century BC, entire India was engulfed by Buddhism. This happened due to the preaching by Emperor Ashoka. The effect of this preaching lasted till 7th Century AD. From 78th to 210th century AD, India was ruled by Kanishka, Huviksha etc. Huviksha made Mathura his capital. At this time there was practically no Hindu Temple or Hindu religious practice. Thereafter the Maurya dynasty ruled from 319 to 400 AD. They too were followers of Buddhism.

THE PROSPERITY AND DECLINE OF MATHURA

Although Hinduism was almost buried, Buddhism too was gradually disappearing. In 400 AD, the Chinese traveller Fa-hien recorded 3000 Buddhists in Mathura, while between 629 AD and 645 AD Huen-Tsang noted 2000 Buddhists only. During 7th century AD, the advent

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of Sri Shankaracharya spelled a catastrophe for Buddhism. He firmly established the Mayavad philosophy on the basis of the Vedas. Later on the gigantic mansion of Bhakti was built gradually on the very strong foundation of Mayavad. In this manner there was a rise in Sanatana Dharma. In between the 7th century and 10th century many Temples of different demi-gods were built in Mathura. The Temples as well as the city of Mathura became very much prosperous. It is learnt that, during this time, Mathura was adorned with silver Temples having golden Deities. This was called the golden Era and the famous King Vikramaditya belonged to this era only. During this time the Hindus gained prosperity in all aspects.

But time is ruthless. In 1018 AD, Mahmud of Gazni, the Muslim invader arrived at the doorstep of Mathura with an enormous army. King Hardatta of Bulandshahar saved his skin by accepting Islam. King Kulachandra of Mahavan gave up his life by fighting the invaders. The savages plundered the incomparable wealth, jewellery and precious stones of the prosperous Mathura Nagari (city) for twenty days at a stretch. At the end of the carnage, there was not a single Temple remaining and not a single citizen alive. The brutal Muslims slaughtered everyone like animals. The contemporary historians have recorded the cruel history of Mahmud Gazni. Mahmud Gazni returned to Kabul carrying all the wealth, jewelry and gold Deities with him. The prosperous Mathura City was transformed into a funeral ground.

The foreign travelers who were wonder struck by the abundance of Indian wealth, gold and gems carried these tales back to their own countries. As a result the immensely powerful Turks, Pathans, Mangols, and Mughals were tempted and they invaded Bharat many a times. In those days, the Hindu kings were weak, dishunited, selfish, and remained busy only in petty quarrels. Hence they could not defend the country under any circumstance, especially in the face of such indomitable force. So, Mathura was reduced to a wasteland for many years.

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Mathura was an important place of pilgrimage for the Hindus. Hence after many years, the Hindus once again came to Mathura and gradually settled there. In the 12th century AD, Sri Jayadev Goswami who was the court – poet of the Bengali king Lakshman Sen came to Vrindavan with his Deities *Sri Radha – Madhava*. He disappeared in Vrindavan itself. At present the Deities are in Jaipur.

Prior to Jayadev, another saint poet had arrived in Vrindavan from the banks of River Krishnaveni in South India. He was none other than Bilvamangal Thakur. On the way he had visions of *Divine* manifestations which he expressed through very sweet verses. These verses were penned down by his Vaishnava associates. Later on they were published as *Sri Krishna Karnamritam*. *Sri Gita Govindam* composed by Srila Jayadev Goswami is also very popular ! It is replete with the descriptions of the sweet forms, qualities and pastimes of *Sri Radha – Madhava*. It is not known accurately when *Sri Bilvamangal Thakur* arrived in Vrindavan. But it is certain that *Vraja-mandal* was bathed by the sweet *rasa* of Vaishnavism by the arrival of *Sri Jayadev* and *Sri Bilvamangal Thakur*.

REPEATED DESTRUCTION OF MATHURA

After Mahmud Gazni it was Muhammad Ghori who attacked India. He defeated Prithviraj, the Hindu king of Indraprastha and captured Delhi. He installed Qutubuddin, a slave captain on the throne and returned to his own country. Hereafter the Muslims started living and ruling over Bharat (India). The throne of Delhi was captured by the slave dynasty, the Tughlaks, the Lodhis etc. in this order. They were all Afghans and ruled for more than 400 years. Ultimately their rule came to an end in the battle of Panipat (1526 AD) and Bharat witnessed the entry of the Mughals.

The Pathan rulers had tyrannized the Hindus from the very beginning. However the Mughal emperors, other than Aurangzeb, had never

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oppressed the Hindus. The city of Mathura is situated in between Delhi and Agra. Moreover it was a pilgrimage spot for the Hindus. Hence the Pathans who hated the Hindus, repeatedly destroyed it. Mathura was destroyed once more by the Tughlak king Feroze Shah who ruled from 1351-1388 AD. His historian has proudly stated – “During his (Feroze Shah’s) reign all religious practices of the pagan Hindus has been forcibly stopped.” At this time nobody could openly perform evening *arati* on the banks of the Yamuna. He destroyed each and every Deity.

Sri Advaita Prabhu (1433 – 1558) arrived at Vrindavan in 1455. While returning to Bengal he met the aged poet Vidyapati. In 1482 he took initiation from Sri Madhavendra Puri. Sri Shankardev who spread Vaishnavism in Assam was Sri Advaita Prabhu's disciple. When Advaita Prabhu had come to Vrindavan, Belal Lodhi was ruling over Delhi. After him Sikandar Lodhi ruled from 1488 to 1516.

THE APPEARANCE OF SRINATHJI

It is recorded in the Hindi text ‘Vallabha Digvijay’ that in 1479 AD, during the reign of Belal Lodhi, Madhavendra Puri had manifested Srinathji (Gopalji), carved by Vajranabh, from a forest in the village of Anyor, close to the Govardhan Mountain. Fearful of the foreign invaders, the *sevaks* had hidden the Deity in the forest and fled in order to save their lives. Later on when Sri Puripad arrived at Anyor, Srinathji Himself appeared in the form of a cowherd boy and offered him milk. Then in a dream, He ordered Sri Madhavendra Puri to dig Him out from the earth and serve Him. There is a detailed description of this incident in the 4th Chapter of Madhya Lila in *Chaitanya Charitamrita*.

Sri Vallabhacharya belonged to the Vishnuswami *sampradaya* and he is the founder of the Vallabha disciplic succession. According to the Hindi book, he accepted *sannyasa* from Madhavendra Puripad in 1521 AD and built the Temple for Srinathji. Sri Puri Goswami

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handed over the *seva* of Srinathji to two Bengali Brahmins belonging to the ascetic order and went away to Sri Kshetra (Jagannath Puri). Then he disappeared in Remuna and never returned to Vraja.

In the text Sri Bhaktiratnakar, it is written that by the wish of Sri Raghunatha Das Goswami, the Vaishnavas handed over Srinathji's *seva* to Sri Vitthaleshwara who was the son of Sri Vallabhacharya. Sri Vitthaleshwara was devoted to *Sri Krishna Chaitanya Mahaprabhu* and looked after Sri Das Goswami. Afraid of Muslim tyranny, Sri Vitthaleshwara brought Srinathji to his own house in Mathura. Srila Rupa Goswami arrived there along with his associates. He was old at that time. They stayed for one month and took *darshan* of the Deity. At that time, the throne of Delhi belonged to the Mughal Emperor Humayun. The wonderful Temples of Sri Vrindavan were all built during the Mughal era.

Once again the Muslim tyranny started in Mathura when Aurangzeb ascended the throne. Hence in 1668, the descendents of Sri Vitthaleswara took Srinathji away to Nathdwara in Udaipur which is surrounded by hills. Maharana Rajsing of Udaipur gifted vast property for Srinathji's *seva*. Till now the *seva* is being carried on in royal style. Sri Vitthaleswara had seven sons. They have their *gadis* in seven different places—Sri Kashi, Sri Gokul, Sri Yatipura, Sri Kamyavan, Kota, Sri Nathdwara and Surat. Of these the *gadi* of Sri Nathdwara is the most important one.

Sikandar Lodhi destroyed Mathura in 1500 AD. He destroyed all the Deities in Mathura. No devotee dared to bathe in the Yamuna. Every non-Muslim had to pay the hateful Jiziya tax. The Hindus did not have to pay this tax only during the reign of Emperor Akbar. This was also the duration of Lord Nityananda's appearance, which is 1475 – 1542. He left his home at the tender age of twelve and took initiation from Sri Lakshmipati Puri in Pandharpur.

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Durng the Nabadwipa pastimes of *Srimanmahaprabhu*, *Sri Lokanath Chakravarti*, a resident of Talakhair in Jessore had come to take his *darshan*. Following the order of *Srimanmahaprabhu*, he arrived at Vrindavan in 1509, accompanied by *Sri Bhugarbha Goswami*, who was the disciple of *Sri Gadadhar Pandit*. This incident occurred before the Lord had accepted *sannyasa*. *Sri Lokanatha Chakravarti* performed his *Bhajan* with utmost devotion in a place called Umrao. Here he begot the Deities of *Sri Radhavinod*. He installed Their Lordships in the cavern of a tree and served Them most lovingly. At present the Deities are in Jaipur. *Lokanatha prabhu* disappeared in 1588.

THE ARRIVAL OF SRI MAHAPRABHU IN VRAJA

Sri Krishna Chaitanya Mahaprabhu arrived in Vrindavan in 1514 AD. In the Sharat season, *Mahaprabhu*, accompanied by *Balabhadra Bhattacharya*, started from Puri and came to Benaras via Jharkhand. He stayed in Tapan Mishra's house. Here *Raja Subuddhi Ray* of Bengal met Him. *Subuddhi Ray* had become an outcaste because of *Nawab Hussain Shah* and he had come to *Mahaprabhu* in order to seek a remedy. The Lord advised him to perform *Hari Bhajan* in *Vraja Dham*. According to this advice *Ray* went to Mathura in 1515 and settled there. The year 1516 witnessed the death of *Sikandar Lodhi*.

In *Mahaprabhu's* time *Hussain Shah* was the ruler of Bengal. He ruled from 1494 to 1525. *Sri Rupa* and *Sanatana* were *Hussain Shah's* cabinet ministers. When the Lord arrived in Kashi, *Sri Raghunatha Bhatta*, who was the son of *Sri Tapan Mishra*, was only a ten year old boy. He had the good fortune to massage the lotus feet of the Lord. *Mahaprabhu* remained in Kashi for ten days and arrived at Vrindavan on *Kartiki Shukla Ekadashi*. He begged for alms at *Akrura Ghat* and performed *Bhajan* daily at *Imlitala*. He toured the twelve forests of Vrindavan along with *Balabhadra Bhattacharya* and His loving

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devotee Krishna Dasa. We have already stated how He arrived at Arit and discovered *Sri Radhakund*.

Mahaprabhu started for Nilachala (Puri) in the beginning of 1515, that is, in the month of Magha. On the way, Sri Rupa Goswami accompanied by his brother Anupam, intercepted Him. They had given up their home and presented themselves to *Mahaprabhu*. This incident took place in Prayag. The Lord dispensed His teachings to Sri Rupa and made him an expert especially in the Science of *Bhakti rasa*. Then He commanded him to go to Vrindavan, manifest the science of Bhakti and reveal the lost holy places. Sri Rupa obeyed his Master most submissively.

Subsequently the Lord arrived at Prayag and once again stayed in Tapan Mishra's house. At this time, Sri Sanatana managed to escape from Hussain Shah's gaol and presented himself to *Mahaprabhu*. For two months *Mahaprabhu* taught him the entire philosophy of Gaudiya Vaishnavism and ordered him to preach *Bhakti - grantha* (Devotional literature) and become a role model for the performance of *Bhajan*, detachment and austerities. He also ordered Sanatana to reveal the lost holy places. In this manner Sri Sanatana arrived in Vrindavan as well

THE STORY OF SRI RUPA - SANATANA

Sri Rupa, Sri Sanatana and Sri Anupam were three brothers. Their father was Sri Kumar Dev. They were Kannada Brahmins. Their forefathers had belonged to the royal family of Karnataka. Due to family quarrels they migrated to Bengal and settled in Naihati. Later on Sri Rupa-Sanatana and their family shifted to Fatehabad which is a part of Chandradwipa Bakla and Jessore. Sri Rupa-Sanatana studied under the famous teacher Vidya Vachaspati of Nabadwipa and became great *pandits*. Their wisdom and talents enchanted Hussain Shah, the ruler of Bengal. He appointed them as ministers and named them 'Dabir Khas' and 'Sakar Mallik.' After becoming ministers they

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started living in Ramkeli in the district of Maldah. According to the author of Vishwakosa, the previous name of Sri Sanatana was 'Amar' and that of Sri Rupa was 'Santosh.' Sri Jiva Goswami, who was the son of Anupam has recorded his family history in 'Laghutosani Purport. Srila Kaviraj Goswami has hinted at how Sri Rupa-Sanatana spent their days in Vrindavan after giving up immense pomp and wealth---

*"Aniketan donhe rahe,--jata vriksha gan,
 ekek vrikshera tale ekek ratri shayan.
 Vipra grihe sthul bhiksha kahan madhukari,
 Shushka ruti chana chabay bhog parihari.
 Karoa matra hate kantha chheda vahirvas,
 Krishna katha Krishna nam nartan ullas.
 Ashtaprahar Krishna bhajan--charidanda shayane,
 Namsankirtane seho nahe kono dine.
 Kobhu bhakti rasa shashtra karaye likhan,
 Chaitanya katha shune, kore Chaitanya hcintan."*
 --(C C. Madhya. 12th ch.)

Meaning - "Both of them wandered homeless. They slept under a different tree each night. Sometimes they accepted *bhiksha* from a Brahmin's house and sometimes did *Madhukari*. At other times they chewed dry *roti* and chickpeas, giving up every form of sense gratification. Their only possessions were a begging bowl, a piece of rag and torn *vahirvas* (loincloth). They spent all their time in *Krishna-katha*, chanting Harinam, dancing in ecstasy and performed *Krishna Bhajan* twenty-four hours a day. They slept only for two hours. On some days they did not sleep even this much. Instead they chanted Harinam. Sometimes they wrote Bhakti Literature; at other times they heard and meditated on the pastimes of Sri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu."

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The texts written by Srila Sanatana Goswami are ---- Vrihad Bhagavatamrita, Sri Hari Bhaktivilasa and its purport, Lilastava or Dashana – Charita, Vrihattosani purport to Srimad Bhagavatam etc. Srila Rupa Goswami composed Bhaktirasmrta Sindhu, Ujjwala Nilamani, Laghubhagavatamrita, Stavamala, Radha-Krishna Ganoddeshadipika, Hamsaduta, Uddhava- sandesha and dramas such as Vidagdha – Madhava, Lalita- Madhava and Dana Keli Kaumudi.

In those days there was no Deity in Sri Vrindavan. In 1533 Sri Sanatana got the Deity of Sri Madanamohan from the house of Parasuram Chaube of Mahavan. He kept Him in his *Bhajan – sthali*. He served the Deity by offering Him unsalted cooked leaves, which he handpicked from the woods. In 1537, Krishnadas Kapoor, a wealthy businessman from Multan built the Temple of Sri Madanmohan Jiu. Sri Sanatana installed the present Krishna-Balaram Deities of Nandagram in 1538. In 1515, Sri Rupa Goswami got the Deity of Sri Govinda Dev from 'Gomatila' (which is famous as Vrindavan yogapeeth) and offered Him *seva*. In 1590, Raja Man Singh of Ambar built a huge Temple for Sri Govinda Dev with Red Stone. We have already mentioned that Vajranabha carved these two Deities.

There is some difference in opinion about the year of appearance and disappearance of Sri Rupa-Sanatana. Vishwakosha, Vaishnava – digdarshani, The History of Gaudiya Vaishnavism, Gaurpada Taranini, the Story of Vraja etc. do not agree with one another on this point. In the Temple of Sri Radharaman in Vrindavan, there is an ancient text called “Seva prakatya o ishtalabher din nirnay” (When the Deities were acquired and Their *seva* was started). In this text the time of appearance and disappearance of the Goswamis is recorded. The above mentioned books do not agree with this ancient text. Of course, there is not too much disagreement either.

According to the description in Bhaktiratnakar, Srinivas Acharya heard the news of Sri Rupa-Sanatana's disappearance one after

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another on his way to Vrindavan. Hence the time span between their disappearances must have been short. It is stated in the 'Suchaka' of Raghunatha Das Goswami that Sri Sanatan disappeared before Sri Rupa. Hence the appearance of Sri Sanatana is estimated to have occurred in 1482 while he is said to have disappeared in the Ashadhi Purnima of 1564. Sri Rupa Goswami is said to have appeared in 1485 and disappeared in the Shukla Dwadashi of Shravan in the year 1564.

SRI RAGHUNATH BHATTA GOSWAMI

When *Srimanmahaprabhu* was staying in Tapan Mishra's house, Sri Raghunath Bhatta, the son of Tapan Mishra was only ten-year old. He had the good fortune of massaging the Lord's Lotus-Feet. When the Lord returned to Nilachala. (Puri), Sri Ragunath Bhatta came to Puri and stayed near Him for eight months. The Lord forbade him to marry and ordered him to study *Srimad Bhagavatam* from a Vaishnava and look after his parents.

On returning home, Sri Raghunatha looked after his father for four years and studied the scriptures. When his father disappeared he went to Nilachala once again and lived there for eight months. Subsequently he came to Vrindavan in order to execute the Lord's command. He used to read *Srimad Bhagavatam* with profound devotion in Sri Rupa Goswami's assembly. About this, Srila Kavira Goswami has written----

*"Rupa gosainer sabhate kore Bhagavata pathan,
Bhagavata padhite preme aulay tara man.
Ashru kampa gadagada prabhur kripate,
Netra kantha rodhe vaspā, na pare padhite.
Pikaswar kantha, tate rager vibhag,
Ek slok padhite phiray tin chari rag.
Krishner saundarya madhurya jabe padhe-sune,
Preme vihval hoy tabe kichui na jane.
Gobinda charane koilo atma-samarpan,*

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Gobinda charanaravinda yanr prana-dhana."

-(C.C. Antya. 13th Ch.)

Meaning - "He (Sri Raghunatha Bhatta) read *Srimad Bhagavatam* in the assembly of Sri Rupa Goswami. While reading, his heart overflowed with love by the mercy of the Lord (*Mahaprabhu*). He showed the signs of ecstasy such as tears, shivering and choking. Due to this he could not read further. When he was able to read he sounded like a nightingale singing in mellifluous tunes. He was able to sing each verse in so many different *ragas*. Whenever he read or heard about the beauty and sweetness of *Krishna* he became overwhelmed with love and his external senses came to a standstill. He was fully surrendered unto the Lotus-Feet of *Sri Govinda*. The Lotus - feet of *Sri Govinda* were his only wealth in life."

Sri Raghunatha Bhatta appeared in 1505 AD. He arrived in Vrindavan sometime during 1522 or 1523. Then Ibrahim Lodhi was seated on the throne of Delhi. However there is some disagreement in Vaishnava History regarding the time of Sri Raghunatha Bhatta's disappearance. In 'Bhaktiratnakar' it is written that on arriving in Vrindavan, Srinivas Acharya found that Sri Raghunath Bhatta had already disappeared. In Bengali literature we find that *Sri Narottama das Thakur Mahashay* arranged a Mahotsav in Kheturi in 1582. Before that Srinivas Acharya had come to Vrindavan twice. This means that *Sri Raghunatha Bhatta* must have disappeared before 1582. On the other hand Srila Kaviraj Goswami mentions that ----- "*Nija sisye kahi Gobinda Mandir karailo.*"

Meaning : "He (*Sri Raghunatha Bhatta*) got *Sri Govinda Mandir* constructed by his own disciple."

There is a stone - inscription on *Govinda Mandir* saying that it was built in 1590 AD by *Raja Mansingh* during the reign of *Emperor Akbar*. Which means that *Sri Raghunatha Bhatta* was living in 1590.

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So we cannot understand why Srinivas Acharya did not get his *darshan* although he arrived at Vrindavan before 1582.

SRI GOPALA BHATTA GOSWAMI

Sri Venkat Bhatta's son Gopala was only 9 years old when *Srimanmahaprabhu* went to South India. He spent the entire Chaturmasya in Sri Venkat Bhatta's house. It is recorded in "The time of seva appearance and acquirement of Deities" that Sri Gopala Bhatta's appearance duration was 1500 AD to 1585 AD. He Came to Kashi and took initiation from his Uncle Sri Prabodhananda Saraswati. This happened when the Lord was still present. The exact time of Sri Prabodhananda's arrival in Vrindavan is uncertain. Sri Prabodhananda has composed many sweet texts such as 'Sri Vrindavan Mahimamritam', 'Sri Chaitanya Chandramritam,' 'Sri Radharasa-sudha-nidhi,' 'Ascarya rasa Prabandhah', 'Sangita-Madhavam' etc. His *Samadhi* was erected in Kaliyadaha.

Sri Gopala Bhatta came to Vrindavan in 1531 from Kashi. When *Srimanmahaprabhu* heard this He sent His *prasadi* loin-cloth and string.

Those were turbulent days for Indian politics. The battle of Panipat took place in 1526 AD. The Mughal ruler Babur defeated Ibrahim Lodhi and ascended the throne of Delhi. He lived only till 1530. Subsequently the throne passed on to his son Humayun who ruled till 1566. Now let us return to Sri Gopal Bhatta.

In Vrindavan Gopal Bhatta served Shaligram shila. On the Vaishakhi Purnima of 1542, overcome by his love, Sri Radha Raman Jiu manifested Himself from Shaligram! The Shaligram is even now attached to the back of Sri Radharaman Jiu. Sometimes Sri Gopala Bhatta came to *Sri Radhakund* and performed *Bhajan*. We find his *Bhajan* – *sthali* here. He along with Sri Sanatana Goswami authored the text 'Sri Hari Bhakti Vilasa.' But it became famous in the name

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of Sri Sanatana Goswamid. He even wrote a wonderful purport to Sri Karnamrita composed by Sri Bilvamangal Thakur. It is called 'Sri Krishna Vallabh'. Sri Gopala Bhatta forbade Srila Krishnadasa Kaviraj Goswami to write anything about him in Sri Chaitanya Charitamrita. Hence Kaviraj Goswami did not write anything pertaining to him. Sri Lokanath Prabhu too had made a similar request.

When Aurangzeb attacked Sri Vrindavan in 1670, all the Deities departed to Jaipur. But Sri Radharaman jiu and Sri Bankebehari Jiu did not leave Vrindavan. Although Sri Govinda, Gopinatha and Madanmohan left for Jaipur, the devotees of Vraja Dham have firm faith and realization that Their Lordships are always present in Vrindavan in Their original forms. Only a part of Them have gone out of Vraja in order to give pleasure to His devotees and deliver the fallen souls. What mysterious and strange pastime of the Supreme personality in the form of Sri Vighraha!

SRILA RAGHUNATHA DAS GOSWAMI

We have a strong desire to learn the history of Sri Radhakund. In our attempt to do so, we got to know some facts about Sri Vraja Dham and the Deities. We also learnt about those associates of Sri Raghunatha das Goswami whose lives were inextricably woven with Vraja Dham viz. the Goswamis. But it was Sri Raghunatha das Goswami who was most closely associated with the heritage of Sri Radhakund. We would surely like to know a lot about him – since one cannot possibly narrate the story of Sri Radhakund without reminiscing about Srila Raghunatha Dasa Goswami.

In the luxurious lap of enormous opulence there arose an embodiment of renunciation and asceticism – Sri Raghunatha das Goswami approximately in the year 1491 AD. In spite of being the master of infinite pomp and luxury, how he was undeterred from treading the

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thorny path of renunciation and reaching the brilliantly sweet realm of *Bhajan*, is a fantastic story.

Saptagram, in the Hooghly district, is a village on the banks of River Saraswati. It was famous since ancient times. It is mentioned in the Puranas that the seven sons of Priyavrata, the King of Kanyakubja, ruled River Saraswati. Unitedly, these seven villages came to be called 'Saptagram'. During the Muslim rule, Saptagram had scaled dizzy heights of prosperity. At this time a very wealthy Hindu *kayastha* family became powerful in this region. Two brothers - Hiranya das and Govardhan das - were born in this family. Very soon they became good administrators and took up the reigns of Saptagram. Their yearly income was 20 lac rupees.

Amidst this immense grandeur Hiranyadas was childless while Govardhan had only one child Raghunath. So naturally he was the sole inheritor of this enormous wealth. In childhood Sri Raghunath had gained the mercy of Namacharya Srila Haridas Thakur. This *mahat kripa* had aroused his natural devotional propensities. Even as a child he had been indifferent to material possessions. He was naturally endowed with devotional qualities such as renunciation of worldly goods. At home he used to hear about Sri Gouranga - the embodiment of love. Since then he had a powerful desire to take *darshan* of Sri Gouranga's lotus - feet.

When Sri Gouranga accepted *sannyasa*, entire Bengal was plunged in grief. On His way to Vrindavan the Lord, brimming with the ecstasy of *prema* wandered for three days in Radha - Desh (now Bangladesh). In order to avoid the crowd, He arrived in Advaita prabhu's house secretly with the help of Lord Nityananda. But even this news leaked out every where. Hearing this news, Sri Raghunatha parents and hurried for the *darshan* of the new *sannyasi*-- *Sri Krishna Chaitanya*. Breathlessly he arrived in Shantipur. Then Shantipur was

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overflowing with *kirtan*. Thousands were flocking for *Mahaprabhu's* *darshan*.

All were drowned in tears when they beheld the *sanmyasa* form of the Lord. After perceiving this grief-stricken scene Raghunatha presented himself at the Lord's lotus feet. On seeing the Lord, Raghu's eyes were flooded with tears, his body was overcome with horripilations and filled with ecstasy. He fell like a stick at the Lord's lotus-feet. Srila Kaviraj Goswami has described this scene in the following manner----

*" sanyasa karia prabhu shantipure aila,
tabe ashi raghunath prabhure milila.
Prabhur charane pare premavishta haiya,
Prabhupada sparsha koilo karuna koriya."*

---(C.C.)

Sri Raghunatha was the son of the wealthy Hiranyadas. He was the sole heir to the ruler of Saptagram. Hence everyone knew him. Srila Advaitacharya had special acquaintance with Hiranya and Govardhan. Hence the Acharya kept Raghunatha in his home for about a week and looked after him with loving care. During this time, by the mercy of Acharya, Raghunatha got to partake of the Lord's *prasad* and behold His lotus-feet.

Raghunatha partook of the Lord's *prasad* that is unobtainable even by Brahma. Due to this a huge wave of love was produced in his heart. But alas! Very soon his good fortune came to an end. Without wasting any more time the Lord took His mother's permission and went away to Nilachala, bidding farewell to Raghunatha. Raghunatha's world was filled with darkness. Floating in tears, he returned home. But he became mad due to the separation from Goursundar,

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Meditating on the lotus – feet of the Lord, Raghu really became mad. He got impatient to serve the lotus feet of the Lord. He could not stay home any longer. His parents and uncle were filled with affection for him. He was the apple of their eyes. Seeing his state they were filled with anxiety. They put him under house arrest since they feared he would run away. He did try to run away to Nilachala. But his attempts were foiled. Hence he got more distressed. Sri Kaviraj has described thus -----

*"Bar bar palay tinho Niladri jaite,
pita tare bandhi rakhen ani path hoite.
Panca paik tare rakhe ratri dine,
Chari sevak dui brahman rahe tari sane.
Ekadas jan tare rakhe nirantar,
Nilachale jaite na pay dukhita antar."*

--(C.C)

Meaning - "He tried to step out of his house under some or the other pretext. When the elders realized his attempts they employed five bodyguards, four servants and two Brahmins who would guard and watch over him all day and night. The love-stricken Raghunath was indeed under house-arrest. He was very sad.

Raghunatha's grief and detachment affected his folks so much that they did not rest in peace even after keeping eleven security guards. Next they got him married to a most beautiful girl in order to make him interested in family life. They arranged many forms of entertainment for him. He was surrounded by various items of sense gratification. These made Raghunatha all the more distressed and frustrated. His heart was longing to taste the honey of the Lord's Lotus Feet. All material luxuries were more hateful to him than the hellish planets. In spite of being intelligent Hiranya and Govardhan could not realize this. Prince Raghunatha spent days and months in Gour-viraha. He became frail due to lack of food and sleep.

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Perceiving no change in him, Hiranya and Govardhan's world of joy drowned in the ocean of sorrow.

From Nilachala, *Mahaprabhu* travelled in South India for two years and again returned to Nilachala. Although He was greatly anxious to behold Vrindavan, He tarried in Nilachala for 3 years in order to fulfil the request of the devotees. In the fifth year He started for Vrindavan. On the way He desired to behold the feet of Mother Ganga. So He travelled to Bengal. Lakhs of people thronged to take *darshan* of the love-filled form of the Lord. The Lord met Sri Rupa – Sanatana in the village of Ramakeli. Sri Sanatana told him –

*"Jar sange chale ei lok lakhsa koti,
Vrindavan jatrar e noy paripati."*

- (C.C.)

Meaning - "My Lord! It doesn't look good to travel to Vrindavan with all this crowd."

The Lord arrived at *Kanair nathsala* (now in Bihar) and thought over these words. He gave up His resolution of travelling to Vrindavan and instead went to Sri Advaita's house in Shantipur.

At this time Raghunatha was imprisoned in his father's house. There was no way he could leave the house without permission.

*"Ebe yadi mahaprabhu shantipure aila,
shuniya pitare raghunath nibedila.
Ajna deho jai dekhi prabhur charan,
Anyatha na rahe mora sharire jiban.
Shuni tar pita bahu lok dravya diya,
Pathaila tare shighra asiho kahiya."*

--(C.C.)

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Meaning - "When he heard that the Lord had arrived in Shantipur, his heart was filled with great anxiety. He tearfully requested his father to permit him to go to Shantipur and behold the Lord's Lotus-feet, since otherwise, (he told his father) he would surely die. When Hiranya and Govardhan heard these anguish-filled words of Ragunatha their hearts melted. They sent Raghu to Shantipur accompanied by plenty of gifts and people."

Raghunatha felt *shanti* (peace) on arriving at Shantipur. He started pondering on how he could gain freedom from the security guards and would live forever in Nilachala along with the Lord. The all-knowing Lord consoled him and gave him a priceless advice ---

*"Sthir haiya ghare jaho, na hao batul,
krame krame pay lok bhava sindhu kul.*

*Markat-vairagya na karo lok dekhaiya,
Yatha yogya vishaya bhunja anasakta haiya.*

*Antare nistha karo, bahye lok vyavahar,
Achirate Krishna tomay karibe uddhar.*

*Vrindavan dekhi jabe asibo nilachale,
Tabe tumi ama pas asiho kono chale.*

*Sekale se chal Krishna sphurabe tomare,
Krishna kripa jare tare ke rakhite pare?"*

-(C.C.)

Meaning --"Return home peacefully. Do not be insane. One is able to cross this material ocean gradually (not in one leap). Do not show-off by assuming 'Markat-vairagya.' Accept material comforts in an appropriate manner and in a detached way. Internally be firm in your devotion, but externally behave normally with people. Very soon *Krishna* will deliver you. When I return to Nilachala after seeing

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Vrindavan, you come to Me under some pretext. *Krishna* Himself will provide you with the necessary ideas. When *Krishna* decides to deliver some one with His mercy, none can stop that devotee."

*"Prabhur shikshate tinho nija ghare jaya,
markat-vairagya chhadi haila vishayir praya.
Bhitare vairagya bahire kore sarva karma,
Dekhi tanr pita matar anandita mana."*

-(C.C.)

Meaning - "Raghunatha was consoled by these nectarine instructions of the Lord. He realized that the Lord's mercy would be showered on him. He stayed for a week in Shantipur in the Lord's association. From there the Lord traveled to Nilachala while Raghunatha returned home. Following the Lord's advice he controlled external *vairagya* and played the part of a material person. His parents, elders, relatives and neighbors all rejoiced at this change."

The days passed in this manner. The Lord had ordered Raghunatha to go to Nilachala the moment He returned from Vrindavan. Raghunatha awaited His order.

One day he received the news of the Lord's return to Nilachala from Vrindavan. Immediately he became anxious to present himself at the Lord's Lotus Feet. Meanwhile Hiranya and Govardhan got into trouble with the Badshah over some property dispute. To avert the trouble, they absconded. Hence the Muslim officers imprisoned Raghunatha. Ultimately Raghunatha's humility, courtesy and above all, his devotion-filled countenance melted their hearts. He became a mediator and solved all problems. This required some days.

One day, all of a sudden, Raghunatha heard that Sri Nitaichand, crazy-with-love, accompanied by associates who were overwhelmed with love, had arrived in Bengal as per the order of *Srimanmahaprabhu*. He was enacting the wonderful pastime of

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distributing love in a village called Panihati. Panihati is not very far from Saptagram and was a part of Raghunatha's property. Eagerly Raghunatha started for Panihati.

From a distance he could hear the sound of tumultuous *kirtan* emerging from the banks of the Ganga. In C.C. it is written --

*"Panihati grame pailo prabhura darasan,
kirtaniya sevakan sange bahujan.
Gangatire vrksamule pindir upare,
Bosi achen yena koti suryoday kore.
Tale upare bahu bhakta haiyache bestita,
Dekhiya prabhr prabhav raghunatha vismita.
Dandavat haiyan sei padila kathodure,
Sevak kahe--raghunatha dandavat kore."*

Meaning - "Very soon he saw Lord Nityananda, tremendously resplendent with love, seated on a platform at the base of a Banyan tree, on the banks of the Ganga. He was surrounded by plenty of devotees singing *kirtan*. Their brilliant bodies showed wonderful signs of ecstasy such as tears and horripilation. It seemed as if nectarine love-filled *sankirtana-rasa* was bodily present. Raghunatha was amazed by the far-reaching effect of Lord Nityananda. Observing His lotus-feet from afar, Raghunatha fell on the earth. A *sevak* informed the Lord about his presence and that he was offering obeisance."

Hearing this the kind-hearted Lord Nityananda gestured Raghu to come near Him. But Raghu humbly stood afar with folded palms. After all he was a worldly man, a materialistic worm, how could he dare to go near the great and merciful Lord Nityananda? Such were his thoughts. The merciful Lord Himself pulled Raghu close to Him and placed His most cooling Lotus-feet that are desired by even Brahma and Maheshwara, and extinguish all burning sensations, right on Raghu's head. HARI! HARI! Is it possible for a mortal to be so

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 fortunate? But Raghunatha was no mere mortal, he was an associate of the Lord. Hence he was the fortunate recipient of such mercy.

*"Shuni Prabhu kohe-chora! Dili darahsan,
 ay, ay, aji tore korimu dandan.
 Prabhu bolay, tenho nikat na kore gaman,
 akarshiya tar mathe dharilo charan.
 Kautuki Nityananda sahaje doyamoy,
 Raghunathe kohe kichhu hoiya saday.
 Nikate na aiso mor, bhago dure dure,
 Aji lagi paiyachon dandimu tomare.
 Dadhichida bhakshan koraho mor gane,
 Shuni anandita hoilo Raghunatha mane."*

-(C.C.)

Meaning - "The Lord jocularly told him - 'You thief! You always stay far and avoid coming in my presence. Today I've caught you. I'll punish you suitably. You have to feed all my associates with 'dadhi-chida' ----(chipped rice in curds).'"

Lord Nitaichand called Raghunatha a 'thief' in jest. Why? A thief secretly steals another's wealth and hides it. In the same way Raghu was trying to obtain the Lotus-Feet of Sri Goursundar - the sole property of Nitai without His knowledge - hence he was a 'thief.' Secondly, Raghunatha's heart was filled with *prema bhakti* and strong *vairagya*, but by the order of the Lord he was hiding the outburst of *vairagya* and *premabhakti*, and instead behaved like a materialist ----hence he was a 'thief.'

The punishment inflicted by Sri Nitaichand on the thief of *premabhakti*, Raghunatha, was most welcome and auspicious. This punishment would enable him to serve all great Vaishnavas and gain their mercy along with the mercy of Sri Nitaichand. This gift of mercy would surely break all his bondage and soon enable him to obtain the lotus-feet of Sri Goursundar. This was the purpose of the

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merciful punishment inflicted by Sri Nitaichand – the very embodiment of dense kindness. Raghunatha accepted this punishment as His utmost compassion. Chipped rice, curds, milk, sandesh, sugar, bananas, mangoes etc. were arranged and a great big feast was celebrated. The compassionate Nitaichand called His heart and soul, Sri Goura, all the way from Nilachala. Some great devotees got His *darshan*. Hundreds of Vaishnavas, Brahmins, decent people, guests and even strangers were welcomed to have the Lord's *prasad*. Raghava Pandit showed his mercy by offering Raghunatha the remnants of the food partaken by the brothers (Goura – Nitai). In Sri Charitamrita (Antya Lila, 6th Chapter) this *mahotsava* has been described in details. Till today the 'Dadhi-Chida Mahotsava' is celebrated on the thirteenth day of the bright lunar fortnight in the month of Jyeshtha, in Panihati as well as in *Sri Radhakund* to commemorate this incident.

Next morning the benign Lord Nitai bathed in River Ganga and sat at the base of the same Banyan tree. Raghunatha paid full obeisance to the Lord and forwarded his heart felt prayer through Sri Raghava Pandit--

*"Adham pamar muin hin jivadhama,
mor iccha hoy paun Chaitanya charan.
Baman haiya yena chand dharibare cay,
Anek jatna koinu jaite, kabhu siddha noy.
Jatobar polaun ami grhadi chadiya,
Pita mata dui jana rakhoye bandhiya.
Tomara kripa bina keha Chaitanya na pay,
Tumi kripa koile tare adhameo pay.
Ayogya muin, nibedana korite karon bhay,
More Chaitanya deho Gosain! Haiya saday.
Mora sire pada dhari karaha prasada,
'Nirvigrahe Chaitanya paun' koro ashirvad."*

-(C.C.)

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Meaning - "O My Lord! I am fallen, sinful, a lowly creature and most unqualified. Just as a dwarf wishes to hold the moon and a lame man wishes to cross the mountain, I too harbor an inordinate ambition of obtaining the lotus-feet of *Sri Chaitanya*. I have made many attempts, but my aim was not realized. Whenever I try to run away, my parents catch me and tie me up. My Lord! In order to obtain the Lotus Feet of Sri Gourahari there is no way other than Your mercy. If You are sympathetic, even a most fallen person can obtain Him. Although I am unqualified to receive any mercy, since You are so very merciful I dare to say this ---Gosain! Kindly give me the Lotus Feet of Lord Chaitanya! Please place Your ever-cooling rosy feet on my head and bless me that I may safely obtain His Lotus-Feet."

Hearing this The merciful Lord Nitaichand beckoned him close, placed His Lotus Feet on his head and spoke most affectionately--

*"Tumi je koraile ei pulina-bhojan,
tomay kripa kori Chaitanya koila agaman.
Kripa kori koila dugdha cipita bhaksan,
Nrtya dekhi ratre koilo prasad bhojan.
Toma uddharite Gour ailo apane,
Chhutilo tomar jato bighnadi bandhane.
Swarupera sthane toma koribe samarpane,
'antaranga bhakta' kori rakhibe charane.
Nischinta haiya jaho apana bhavane,
Acire nirbighne pabe Chaitanya charane."*

-(C.C.)

Meaning : "You arranged a very nice picnic. Lord *Chaitanya* arrived here Himself in order to bestow His mercy on you. He showed His mercy by accepting the milk and chipped rice. He witnessed the congregational dancing and accepted *prasadam* at night. Lord Gouranga came here on His own in order to deliver you. All the obstacles on your devotional path have now disappeared. He will hand you over to Swarupa Damodara and keep you at His Lotus-Feet

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as a confidential associate. You may return home in peace. You will obtain the Lotus feet of Lord Chaitanya very soon."

What could be a greater blessing than this ? How can one obtain such concrete assurance in such a short time without taking shelter of the holy feet of the most merciful Nityachand? Raghunatha considered himself fortunate indeed and returned home from Panihati. Now his detachment and *premabhakti* knew no bounds. He did not care to eat and spent many sleepless nights crying out to Lord Gouranga like a caged bird. Day and night he sought out ways to flee. He did not step inside the house any more, but slept in the Chandimandapa (place where Goddess Durga is worshiped) outside.

Once more Raghunatha started running away from home. Again he got caught by his parents and was forced to return. His mother was heart broken. Raghu was the apple of her eyes, her most precious treasure. She could not bear the thought of losing him forever. At last she asked Raghu's father to tie him up. His father replied sadly--

*"Indra sama aishwarya, stri apsara sama,
e saba bandhite narileka jar mana.
Dadir bandhane tare rakhibe ke mate,
Janmadata pita nare prarabdha khandate.
Chaitanya chandreri kripa haiyache ihare,
Chaitanyachandreri baul ke rakhibe pare."*

-(C.C.)

Meaning - " The one who cannot be tied down by a wealth equal to that belonging to Indra and a wife resembling an *apsara*, is it possible to tie him with a rope? A father cannot destroy *prarabdha* (destiny). He has obtained the mercy of *Chaitanya Chandra*. You cannot restrict one who is crazy about *Chaitanya Chandra*."

It is very true. The one who has lost his heart to *Chaitanya Chandra* cannot be tied up. Raghu was no ordinary mad man. Had he been so, he could have been cured or at last tied up. But he was crazy in

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separation from Lord Gouranga. Hence no rope in this world was strong enough to tie him. There was no medicine other than the nectar oozing out of the Lotus-Feet of Sri Gouranga that could cure this disease. Hence Raghu was not tied up. However strong security was arranged. Whole night they watched over Raghu.

One night Raghu was lying down in the Chandimandapa. He could not sleep – he had only one worry – how could he run away to Goursundar? He had security all around him. The night was nearly over. All of a sudden Sri Yadunandan Acharya who was his teacher and family priest, called out to him. Raghu came out and paid obeisance. Acharya told him that a Brahmin disciple used to serve the Deities. But since a few days he had not come to serve. Acharya had been unable to find another *sevaka*. He thought that if Prince Raghunatha asked the Brahmin to continue his services he would not refuse. He feared that the Brahmin might leave the village in the morning. Hence he took Raghu with him in the wee hours towards the *pujari*'s house. The security guards thought to themselves ---“ How can he run away when he is being accompanied by Acharya himself?” With their minds put to rest, they decided to have quick nap and immediately fell asleep.

Acharya's house was to the east of Raghunatha's house while the *pujari* lived a little more ahead of Acharya's house. Both of them proceeded in that direction. When they approached Acharya's residence, Raghunatha told him--- "Please don't take the trouble to walk any further. Why don't you return home? Please permit me to go and execute your order." Acharya was a simple man. He was taken up by Raghunatha's words and mannerism. He gave his permission and went home. Raghunatha simply grabbed this golden opportunity and excitedly ran asunder through woodlands and forests crying out "Ha Govinda ! Ha Nitai !" He had gone mad with joy. He traveled for twelve sleepless days and nights before reaching Puri. On the way he had eaten on only three days! It was approximately 1516 AD.

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Raghunatha's long wait had at last borne fruit. He had managed to reach Goursundar. Sri Swarupa accompanied the Lord. Mukunda Dutta spotted him at a distance and exclaimed--"My Lord! Please look! That Raghu has come!" The most merciful Lord gestured him not to be afraid and come near. Raghunatha went near and clung to His Lotus-Feet. The Lord lifted him and embraced him tightly. Raghunatha rested his head on the Lord's vast bosom and forgot all his troubles. Raghunatha, who felt like a *premakalpa latika* (the wish-fulfilling love-creeper) burning in the material forest fire was at last cooled entirely by obtaining the shelter of Sri Gouranga – the *Premakalpa taru* (the wish-fulfilling love-tree). After this he paid obeisance to all the associates of the Lord.

*"Prabhu kahe--Krishna kripa balistha, sabha haite,
tomake kadhilo vishay vishtha garta haite.
Raghunatha kohe--ami Krishna nahi jani,
Tomara kripa kadhilo ama, ei ami mani."*

-(C.C.)

Meaning - "The Lord said -- 'Raghunatha! There is nothing more attractive than the mercy of Krishna. Nothing else could have delivered you from the depths of material crevice.' To this Raghu humbly commented--'My Lord! I know not Krishna. I only know that I have been delivered by Your mercy alone.'"

Thus Raghunatha was delivered from severe material bondage by the mercy of Mahaprabhu. The Lord wished to make him happy by submerging him in the sweet *rasa* of Vraja. Hence He surrendered him to Srila Swarupa-damodara who is the original *Shiksha-Guru* of Vraja-*rasa* and the very embodiment of Vraja-*rasa*. He said--

"My dear Swarupa! I am surrendering this Raghunatha to you. He is very dear to Me – please care for him as your own child. He too will serve you humbly. This thing now belongs to you. From today onwards he will become popular as 'Swarupa's Raghunatha'."

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Saying this, He placed Raghunatha's hand in Swarupa's hand. Swarupa embraced him and made him his own.

The princely Raghunatha now looked like wilted creeper burnt due to starvation, insomnia and hardship of traveling. The kind-hearted Lord noticed this. He asked Govindadas to take special care of Raghunatha for a few days and feed him with prasadam. Raghunatha was the incarnation of *vairagya* – he is the ideal for all desire-free Vaishnavas. How could he accept good quality prasadam brought by someone else? From the 6th day onwards Raghunatha started performing strong *vairagya* – *sadhana*. He would submerge in blissful *Bhajan* all-day and stood at the main gate of the Temple after sunset. There generous people would see him and give him some rice – prasadam.

When the Lord got this news from Govinda, He was extremely pleased. Under the pretext of addressing Raghunatha, *Mahaprabhu* has given nectarean instruction to all Vaishnavas in the order of renunciation in the following manner ---

*"Shuni tusta haiya Prabhu kahite lagila,
bhalo koilo bairagir dharma acharila.
Vairagi koribo sada nama sankirtan,
Magiya khaiya kore jivan raksan.
Vairagi haiya je kore parapeksa,
Karya siddhi nahe Krishna koren upeksa.
Viragi haiya kore jihvara lalas
Paramartha jaya tar hoy rasera vas.
Vairagir kṛtya sada nama sankirtan,
Sak patra phala mule udara bharan.
Jihvara lalase jei iti uti dhay,
Shishnodara parayana Krishna nahi pay.* -(C.C.)

Meaning : - Hearing these words from Govinda, the Lord was pleased. He said ---" It is good that he is performing the prescribed

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duties of the renounced order. When one accepts the renounced order, one should always chant the Holy Name. He should beg in order to support his life. If a *vairagi* has any expectation, he will not succeed in obtaining *prema bhakti* and *Krishna* will disappoint him. If a *vairagi* is greedy, all his spiritual endeavours come to a nought. Instead he becomes a slave of his tongue. The duty of a *vairagi* is to chant the Holy Name always. He has to make do with vegetables, leaves, fruits and roots. **One who runs here and there in search of good food and sexual satisfaction will never get *Krishna*.**"

These nectarine instructions must be followed seriously by each and every one living in the renounced order. Presently we find the renounced order in a very sorry state. It is very sad that the men in the *vairagi ashrama* are weak-hearted and are unable to observe the strict rules of the *vairagi ashrama*. We find people in the *vairagi ashrama* living more comfortably and luxuriously than the householders. They are embroiled in huge undertakings such as opulent Temples, mega feasts and setting up huge organizations. They are indulging in such sinful activities that are hated even by householders. For all *vairagis* who are sheltered at the Lotus-Feet of Lord Goursundar, can anything else be more grievous and a cause for remorse? This is a Dark Age for the renounced order. Hence every single *vairagi* must keep in mind the words spoken by the Lord Himself and thus perform *Bhajan*.

In this manner Raghunatha spent his days in Nilachala, close to the Lord's Lotus-Feet his eagerness for *Bhajan* increased day by day. He had a desire that the Lord should Himself instruct him about *Bhajan*. But Raghunatha was a storehouse of humility and modesty. He did not have the courage to speak up in front of the Lord. He expressed his wish to Swarupa, since he used to forward all his requests through Swarupa and Govinda only.

When the Lord heard Raghu's request He smiled and said " When I have appointed Swarupa as your instructor why do you worry ? Study

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sadhya-sadhana-tattva from him only. To tell you the truth, he has more knowledge about these topics than I do. Even then, if you have faith in My words, then listen -----

*"Gramya katha na shunibe, gramya varta na kahibe,
bhalo na khaibe ar bhalo na poribe
Amani manad sada Krishna nama lobe,
Vraje Radha-Krishna seav manase koribe.
Ei to sanksepe ami koilo upades
Swarupera thain ihar paibe vishesh.
Trinadapi sunichena taroriva sahihsnuma,
Amanina manadena kirtaniya sada harih."*

Meaning : "Do not indulge in gossip. Do not wear good clothes and do not eat good food. Do not expect any respect (be humble). Respect others and always chant the Holy Name. Perform *smarani* – *seva* of *Radha* – *Krishna* in *Vraja*. I have given you briefed instructions. Swarupa will explain to you in details. Be more humble than a blade of grass and more tolerant than a tree. Always chant the Holy Name by being humble and respectful to others". Thus Raghunatha obtained the highest instructions from the Holy mouth of the lord. He paid obeisance and etched these nectarean instructions in his innermost heart. The Lord embraced him and once again surrendered him to Swarupa. Raghunatha had the good fortune to offer intimate service to the Lord due to Swarupa's association.

After some days, Raghunatha stopped begging at the main gate. He started taking prasadam in the *chhatra* (almshouse). The affectionate Lord had all the news about Raghu. Hearing this from Swarupa and Govinda, the Lord was pleased and said--

"It is good that he stopped waiting at the main gate. Begging at the main gate is a prostitute's job. One should be satisfied with whatever one may get in the *chhatra*. There is no need of speaking to anyone. You can chant the Holy Name joyously."

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Raghunatha observed strict rules of *vairagya* that enhanced day by day. Seeing this the Lord was most pleased and gifted him with Sri Govardhan shila (Girirajji) and Gunjamala. These were priceless gifts. Sri Shankarananda Saraswati had brought these wonderful things from Vrindavan and gifted them to Mahaprabhu. The Lord had kept them for three years. Sometimes He touched them to His head, sometimes took their fragrance and sometimes held them to His eyes and breast. He used to get submerged in wonderful bliss. The Lord considered Sri Govardhan – Shila as the embodiment of Sri Krishna. He bathed the *shila* with tears. He got the fragrance of the body of Krishna whenever he smelt it and was thrilled. The Lord gifted Raghu with something dearer than His life. Like servant, like Master. The wonderful gift spoke volumes about the mercy of the Lord. Raghunatha became the fortunate inheritor of the incomparable wealth of *prema* – *bhakti* resposed in the *sila* and *mala* by *premamaya* Mahaprabhu.

Srimanmahaprabhu said --- “ Raghunatha ! This sila is verily the Deity of Lord Krishna. Hence you should worship Him most eagerly. You should offer service in the mode of pure goodness. Very soon you will obtain *Krishna* – *Prem*. Worship Him with a jug of water and *tulasi* – *manjari* (inflorescence). The newly bloomed *manjari* should be nestled in between two leaves. Offer eight such *manjaris* with reverence.”

Prince Raghunatha had been rendered a beggar – absolutely penniless. Sri Swarupa gave him a seat for Sri Girdhari, two pieces of cloth and a jug to hold water. Raghu started worshipping Giridhari with firm devotion. While worshipping Raghunatha saw his worshiped Deity Sri Vrajendranandan in the sila. Raghunatha thought to himself --- “ Lord Krishna is so merciful to me because this Govardhan – sila has been given by the Lord Himself. Thinking thus, Raghu floated in the ocean of *prema*.

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Mahaprabhu who was always submerged in serious *bhava* had a most confidential aim when He gave the gunjamala and Govardhan-sila to Raghunatha. Raghunatha realized this by the Lord's mercy. He understood that by giving him the gunjamala, the Lord had surrendered him at the Lotus-feet of Srimati Radharani and by giving him the Govardhana-sila, the Lord had asked him to perform bhajan at Govardhana. He surrendered himself totally at Goursundar's feet.

Gradually Raghunatha's devotional firmness and *vairagya* reached a subtle realm beyond all material concepts. It was something very rare in the history of creation. In Puri there is an age-old custom of selling Mahaprasadam. When some Mahaprasadam did not get sold and got accumulated in the shops for two or three days, it became unfit for human consumption. The shopkeepers had no option but to give it away to the cows. Due to putrefaction, even the cows refused to touch it. It remained on the ground. Raghunatha brought this prasadam home. He washed it with water. The external portion would dissolve and little firm part would be obtained. Raghunatha ate this with salt. He relished it as if he was partaking of nectar.

One day Sripad Swarupa saw Raghu partaking of *prasadam* in this manner. He said - "Raghu! Everyday you relish such nectar all by yourself! Must you not share it with us? It is just not fair on your part." Saying this, Swarupa tasted a little and was pleased. The Lord heard this news from Govinda. Once when Raghu was partaking of this *prasadam*, the Lord came there suddenly and said - "I heard that you relish wonderful *prasadam* everyday! Why don't you give Me some?" Saying this the Lord grabbed a morsel from Raghu's vessel and ate it. Raghu was scared and embarrassed. When the Lord took another morsel, Swarupa caught hold of His hand and said --- "Enough! This is not fit for You", and he snatched the morsel from Mahaprabhu's fist. The Lord said - "Swarupa, I partake of so many different types of *prasadam* daily. But I have never tasted anything so wonderful."

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Factually the Lord found the Mahaprasadam so tasty because Raghunatha's devotion for Mahaprasadam, his transcendental sacrifice, *vairagya* and firmness in devotion was mixed with it. Humility, modesty, detachment and self-sacrifice are great helpers of devotional practise. Sri Raghunatha was the very embodiment of the regulative principles. He had appeared in order to teach all the practicing devotees of the world how to perform Bhajan.

"Ananta gun Raghunather ke koribe lekha?

Raghunather niyam jena pashaner rekha.

Sadhe sat prahar jay janhar smarane,

Ahar nidrar chhari danda seho kono dine.

Vairagyer katha tanr adbhuta kathan,

Ajanma na dilo jihvaya rasera sparshan.

Chhinda kani kantha binu na pare vasan

Sabdhane koilo Prabhur ajnar palan."

Meaning : Who can describe the infinite qualities of Raghunatha ? He observed the rules of Bhajan so strictly as if they were etched on rock. He performed Lila-smaran for seven and half praharas [Prahara=approx. 3 Hours]. He spent only 4 dandas in eating and sleeping. [1 danda = 24 minutes] He observed wonderful *vairagya*. He never allowed his tongue to touch anything tasty. He wore nothing but torn rags. In this way he obeyed the Lord with utmost care."

Raghunatha had the good fortune of living at the Lotus-Feet of Srimanmahaprabhu for sixteen long years. All the while he remained absorbed in strict *vairagya* and single-pointed *bhajan nistha*. But within the blink of an eye the days of fortune came to an end. All of a sudden the full moon of Nilachala laughingly disappeared. The world was engulfed in darkness. The devotees were dumbfounded and shocked as if struck by a thunderbolt. The bliss of never ending *Kirtan* was submerged in silence. There was only one cry - "**Ha Gouranga !**" All quarters were filled with laments, hot sighs and sad tears of grief-stricken devotees. The flower - groves dried; buds

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bloomed no more and the sweet humming of kirtan by the devotees who resembled the bees fell silent ! The honey of Nilachala was over! It was not long before Sri Swarupa also followed Lord Goursundar. Raghunatha lost all patience due to this great separation. He was heart – broken, his body slackened and he felt his life was empty. He could stay no longer in Nilachala. He decided to give up his grief – stricken life in Vrindavan.

*"Chaitanyer agochare, nija kesh chhindi kore,
virahe vyakul Vraje gela.*

*Deha tyaga kori mane, gela giri Govardhane,
Dui gosain tahare dekhila.*

*Dhari Rupa sanatana, rakhila tahar jivan,
Dehatyag korite na dila.*

*Dui Gosainer ajna paiya, radhakunda tate giya
Vas kori niyam korila."*

-(Pada Kalpataru)

Meaning : “ When Sri Chaitanya disappeared Raghunatha became mad with grief and tore his hair. Unable to bear the pangs of separation, he left for Vrajadham. He went to Govardhan in order to give up his body. There Rupa–Sanatana caught hold of him and did not let him die. Taking permission of the Goswamis, he went to Radhakund and lived there following all regulative principles of Bhajan.”

After the disappearance of Srimanmahaprabhu and Swarupa, Sripad Raghunatha arrived at Vrindavan in 1533 AD and submerged himself in *Bhajan–rasa* on the banks of *Sri Radhakund*, being advised by Sri Rupa–Sanatana to do so.

According to the Goswamis, Srimat Raghunatha Das Goswamipad was Ratimanjari or Tulasimanjari of Vrajadham. While living in Radhakund, by the mercy of Srimanmahaprabhu, Raghunatha became so much absorbed in his original self as a *manjari* that he lost all external senses and became extremely impatient to actually behold Sri

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Radharani and obtain Her service. He was filled with pangs of separation from Radharani and his heart was agitated. This is evident from his composition of *Satanam – Stotra* of Sri Radha (one hundred glorious names of Sri Radha) in his text *Stavavali*. At the very beginning he writes---

"A viksyā tmeswarim kacid vrindavana Mahesvarim, tat padambhoja matraika gatirdasyati katara, patita tatsarastire rudatya rttaravakulam tatsrivaktreksanavaptyai namanyetani samjagau."

Meaning : "When a maid servant of Sri Radha, whose only shelter is Her Lotus Feet, was unable to find the mistress of her soul (Sri Radha), she became extremely anxious to behold Her moon – face and falling down on the banks of Sri Radhakund cried profusely and sang out these glorious names in a piteous tone."

Vilapakusumanjali composed by Sripad Raghunatha Das Goswami contains many prayers, which tell us about the huge distress and anxiety arising from the burning pangs of heartfelt separation from Radharani. [Please refer Sri Vilapakusumanjali compiled by me.]

All the texts composed by him, be it Mukta Charita, Stavavali or Danakeli Chintamani, prove his excellence in Sanskrit as well as deep realizations in Bhajan. Gradually the weight of separation gave rise to miraculous vairagya in Sripad. The Mahajanas give us slight idea about this---

"Being separated from Radha-Krishna, he gave up every *bhog* (luxury). He lived on only dry coarse grains. Being separated from Gouranga he gave up grains. He lived on only fruits and milk. When Sanatana disappeared, he gave up even this. He only drank water. Being separated from Sri Rupa, he gave up water. Unable to find Rupa and his followers he cried out in distress.

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Unable to hear any form of *Krishna-katha*, he gave out heart-rending cry--"Alas RadhaKrishna! Where are You? Where are Lalita and Visakha? Kindly give me *darshana*. Alas Chaitanya Mahaprabhu! Alas Swarupa, my Prabhu! Alas Rupa Sanatana! The Goswami cried day and night, his heart and body burnt every moment, his body was covered in dust. He became blind and starved, he could not carry his own body, he became feverish in *viraha*.

He fell on the banks of Radhakund, and gave out deep sighs. He could not even speak. His tongue moved softly. His eyes overflowed with tears of love in his mind. He did Krishna-smaran."

-(Padakalpataru)

While living on the banks of Sri Radhakund, Raghunatha gave up food and water. He lived only on a palmful of buttermilk. He was oblivious of his body and remained absorbed in bhajan all day and night. Since he did not care for his body at all, Sri Rupa-Sanatana came to Radhakund to inquire about him. Even in this situation, he had a desire to perform *samskara* of the kundas, it is due to this that even today the kundas and the land attached to them are hailed as the Bhajan-wealth of the entire Gaudiya Vaishnava community. We owe this to Sri Raghunatha Das Goswami alone. In *Sri Bhakti Ratnakar* it is written---

"All of a sudden, Raghunatha felt that it would be nice if the kundas were filled with water. But the moment he realized that money would be required for this, he became stupefied. He cursed himself repeatedly for having even thought of money. Ultimately he controlled himself and took care to remain aloof. However, Krishna always fulfils the desire of His devotee.

One day a wealthy man visited Badrinatha. He offered much money to the Lord. The Deity ordered him in a dream to take the money to Arit and hand it over to a great Vaishnava called Raghunatha Das. Lord Narayana told him to give the money in His name. "If he still

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refuses to accept it, then remind him that he had wished to clean the kundas so that their water could be used for bathing and drinking." Saying this the Lord bade him farewell.

In a joyous mood the man came to Arit. He approached Raghunatha, payed him obeisance and offered him the money. He told him all about the Lord's command. Raghunatha listened in a dazed manner. After some time he spoke. He praised the fortunate man again and again. Immersed in joy he asked him to purify the lakes. At once he employed many labourers to dig up the lakes. Now you listen carefully how Shyamakund became crooked :

On the banks of Shyamakund, there was a very old tree. Everyone decided to cut it on the following day. But that night, Raghunatha got a dream in which King Yudhisthira appeared and said ---- " We, the five Pandavas, are living here in the form of trees. Tomorrow morning go to Manasa - pavana - ghat and seek out the five trees and please protect them." Seeing this dream, Raghunatha woke up at dawn and sought out the trees. He stopped the felling of the trees. This is the reason why Shyamakund could not be square, but remained crooked. After the *samskara* the lakes were filled with clean water and Raghunatha was mighty pleased to see this."

SRILA JIVA GOSWAMI

When Srimanmahaprabhu reached Prayag from Vrindavan (1515 AD), Sri Rupa had arrived there with his younger brother Anupam. When the Lord left for Puri, the two brothers came to Vrindavan, stayed here awhile and returned to Bengal. Sri Anupam left his body on the way. Srila Jiva Goswami is the worthy son of this very Anupam. Sri Jiva appeared approximately in 1512 AD. According to Bhakti Ratnakar, Sri Jiva first beheld Srimanmahaprabhu in the village of Ramakeli.

"Sri Jiva secretly saw the Lord. We heard this from very aged people."

-(Bhaktiratnakar)

Sri Jiva studied grammar, rhetoric etc. at a very early age. When Sri Rupa-Sanatana got fed up of materialism and left home, anxious to meet Sri Gouranga, Sri Jiva's attachment for his family too slackened gradually. Sri Rupa-Sanatana also started attracting Jiva from Vrindavan. Material pleasures did not give him happiness any more. With an anxious heart, he went to Nabadweep on the pretext of gaining higher education. There he beheld Lord Nityananda in Shrivasa-angan (Shrivasa's courtyard). Sri Nityananda was flooded with parental love and placed His lotus - feet on Sri Jiva's head. Then He embraced him tightly and spoke sweetly--

"The Lord asked him to go to Vraja since Mahaprabhu had reserved this place for his (Sri Jiva's) family. Being thus ordered by the Lord, Sri Jiva left for Vrindavan after paying obeisance to all the devotees."

-(Bhakti Ratnakar)

Sri Jiva obeyed the Lord most submissively and headed for Vrindavan. Before he left, Lord Nityananda ordered Sri Jiva to study Vedanta and other scriptures under the tutelage of Sri Madhusudana Vachaspati in Kashi. Sri Jiva stayed in Kashi for six years and studied Vedic Literature from Sri Vachaspati. After he had mastered all the texts he left for Vrindavan. Here, Sri Rupa-Sanatana mercifully taught him all the Bhakti Literature. Sri Jiva's extraordinary display of learning, knowledge of the finest points of philosophy and an expertise to deliberate on a vast range of scriptures are evident from his compositions.

He has written profusely and composed various commentaries, purports and texts such as the six sandarbhas, Gopalacampu, Madhava Mahotsava, Harinam namamrita vyakaran, Sutramalika, Dhatusamgraha etc.

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Sri Jiva Goswami bought Sri Radhakund, Shyamakund and all the land attached to them in the life time of Srimat Das Goswami itself. In the gaddi (seat) of Sri Das Goswami there are seven deeds proving the sale of the land under and around the lakes. The names of the sellers are as follows: Kanha, Salaya, Adhara, Maja, Kujja, Govinda and Bhuriya. The Land under Sri Radhakund was bought in 1545 AD for Rs. 60 and is recorded in two deeds, while the land under Sri Shyamakund was bought in 1553 AD for Rs. 80. In those days the land under Radhakund was called 'Gori' (fair) and the land under Shyamakund was called 'Kari' (Black). Most probably, this was due to the color of the soil found in the lakes. In 1577 AD, the land attached to the lakes was bought and recorded in four deeds. Hence Sri Radhakund and Sri Shyamakund were bought in 1546 and 1553 AD respectively. One of the sale deeds is as follows: -

[Khadim Saraha Rasul Muthin Qutbuddin]

"Tamsuk va muhar sariyat saha Qazi Badruddin Ikrarse va tariq 9 rik zafar san 996 Hijra. Garaz is lekhke yeh hai ki musmiyan Kanha waled Kanro, Salaya waled Dusha, Adhara waled Muksa, Maja waled Kalli, Kujja waled Asuya, Govinda waled Cohra, Bhuriya waled Kanka. Sakim mauja Arit urf Radhakund amla pargana sahar ke hain. Jo ki zamin majkur varat Krishna kund taraf uttar karil bara kuan govind, taraf purab nal o darkhat his wa taraf daksin diwala mahadev apni khushise yati badast Jiva Gosain Ko farokat kiya rupiya apne kharac me laya. Agar koi davedar hot jhuta samjha jaye."

Meaning: - "Dated 9 Rik zafar year 996 Hijra. The aim of this deed is to state that Kanha the son of Kanro, Salaya the son of Dusha, Adhara the son of Muksa, Maja the son of Kalli, Kujja the son of Kanka, residents of Radhakund alias Arit have sold the land extending from Krishnakund (Shyamkund) upto Govind kuan in the north and from the canal to the east to the Mahadeo Temple in the south. They have

willingly sold the land to the Honorable Saint Jiva Gosain in return for eighty rupees and they have received the money. Any claimant to this property should be considered false."

When Emperor Akbar heard about the wonderful bhajan performed by the Goswamis he came to Vrindavan. He was accompanied by some important ministers such as Raja, Todarmal etc. The transcendental power of the Goswamis filled the Badshah with admiration. He was wonder struck. The emperor prayed the Goswamis to allow him to offer some seva. They told him to enact some law to prevent animal-slaughter in Vrajamandal. In accordance, in 1018 Hijri Emperor Akbar issued a royal order forbidding animal-slaughter in Vrajamandal. This order was obeyed during the Jat rule and even during the British period. It is followed in the present days also. This order is etched on rock on the road from Vrindavan to Mathura as well as near Kusumsarovar.

Akbar Badshah encouraged the Hindu kings to build new Temples for the Deities in Vrindavan. Due to this, Raja Mansingh built Sri Govindadev Mandir and Raja Todarmal built Sri Haridev Mandir in Govardhan. Raja Mansingh's father Sri Bhagavan Das paved the banks of Manas Ganga with stone. After building Sri Govindadev Mandir, Raja Mansingh paved the banks of Sri Radhakund with bricks. We find a document addressed to the third Mahanta Srila Krishnadasji, dated 6th May 1642 AD, signed by four persons viz. Bari Khan, Haider, Gaddar and Muqaddam wherein they have vowed that no one will divert the water of Sri Radhakund, no one will remove the bricks of the kund and no one will fell the trees on the banks. Hence it is proved that the banks of Sri Radhakund were indeed built with bricks.

Srimat Raghunatha Das Goswamipad was the first Mahant of Sri Radhakund, Srimat Jiva Goswamipad was the second while Sri Krishnadasji was the third Mahant. Many people think that this Sri Krishnadasji was the same as the author of Sri Chaitanya

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Charitamrita. But this is not possible, since Kaviraj Goswamipad appeared approximately in 1523 AD. He was ordered by Srīman Nityananda Prabhu to come to Vraja. He must have arrived at Sri Radhakund mostly in 1554 AD. He composed Sri Chaitanya Charitamrita in Radhakund itself. At the end of the text, he has recorded the finishing date as follows ----

*“sake sindhvagnivanendau Jyestha vrinda vanantare ,
suryenhyasitapancamyam granthoyam purnatam gatah”.*

Meaning : “This text (Sri Chaitanya Charitamrita) is completed on Krishna pancami, Sunday, Jyestha month, 1537 sakabda,”

While beginning Madhyalila of Sri Chaitanya Charitamrita he had felt that due to old age, he might leave his body before completing the text. Hence he had described the Gambhira pastime in the 2nd chapter of Madhyalila in brief and has written at the end of this chapter---

“I am very old and infirm. My hand shakes while writing. I cannot remember anything. I can neither see nor hear. Yet it is miraculous that I can write. I have described the Antyalila in brief since I fear I may die in between and won't be able to complete it. These pastimes (Antyalila) are a treasure for the devotees.”

At the end of the text too he has written--

“I am very old and infirm. I am blind and deaf. My hand shakes. My brain does not function properly. I am suffering from so many illnesses --- I may die anytime.”

When the text had ended in 1615 AD, his age was estimated to be 92 years. Hence he had not lived long after the completion of the text. Some historian has estimated the year of his disappearance as 1615 AD. Hence it is simply not possible for a document dated 6th may 1642 AD to be addressed in his name. Thus it is established that the

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third Mahant Sri Krishnadasji was not Sri Krishnadas Kaviraj Goswami.

Sri Narottama Das Thakur Mahashaya lived from 1531 to 1611 AD. He arrived at Vrindavan in the year 1565. Sri Shyamananda Prabhu arrived in the following year. Sri Srinivas Acharya, Sri Narottama and Sri Shyamananda who were bosom friends came to Radhakund and beheld Sri Das Goswami. He was very old then.

They had studied Bhakti Literature under Sri Jiva Goswami and had preached extensively in Bengal. Srila Thakur Mahashaya had taken initiation from Srila Lokanatha Goswami in 1567 and after returning to Bengal, he arranged a grand feast in 1582 that went down in history as the famous 'Kheturi feast'.

Srila Madhu Pandit obtained the Deity of Sri Gopinathjiu in 1563 near Vamsivat. Sri Raisingh built a Temple for Sri Gopinathjiu in 1632 during Emperor Shahjahan's reign.

SRI JAHNAVA GHAT

Lord Nityananda's spiritual potency Sri Jahnava Thakurani came to Vrindavan in 1582. Sripad Das Goswami was unable to walk. He prayed to Ishwari Thakurani for *darshan*. Hence Sri Ishwari arrived at Radhakund. The meeting between Sri Das Goswami and Sri Ishwari has been described in a touching manner in **Bhaktiratnakar**-----

*"Krishnadas Kaviraj agrete asiya,
das goswamir age chhila dandaiya.
Avasar paiya karaye nivedan--
Sri Jahnava Ishwarir hoilo agaman.
Shuni ki adbhuta prem vyapilo hridaye,
Agusari cale asru yukta netradvaye.
Sri Ishwari dekhe Das Goswami gaman,
Atisaya ksin tanu tej sryasama.*

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*Sri Ishwari antar bujhite keba pare?
Jhare dui netre bari nibarite nare.
Sri das Goswami pranamite dhairiyadhari,
Koilo ye uchit premamayi Sri Ishwari.
Sri Ishwari age das Goswami ye koy,
Taha shuni kar ba na vidare hriday?"*

Meaning - Sri Krishnadasa Kaviraj Goswami approached Das Goswami and said humbly ---“ Sri Jahnava Ishwari has arrived.” Hearing this he was filled with ecstasy. His eyes overflowing with tears, he came forward. Sri Ishwari saw that he was extremely thin, but shone brilliantly like the sun. Her eyes started over flowing with uncontrolled tears. Who could fathom her feelings? When Sri Das Goswami paid obeisance, she managed to control herself. Whose heart would not melt after hearing what Das Goswami spoke to Ishwari?

The northern bank of Sri Radhakund is called Sri Jahnava Ghat. Here you can see the *baithak* of Sri Jahnava Thakurani at the base of an ancient Bakula tree. The Deities of Sri Gopinatha, Sri Radharani and Sri Jahnava Thakurani are served in the Temple on this Ghat.

Sri Madhu Pandit, Sri Lokanatha Goswami, Sri Bhugarbha Goswami, Sri Kasishwara, Sri Gopala Bhatt and Sri Haridasa Swami all lived in Sri Gopinatha Ghera in Sri Vrindavan. Sri Haridasa Swami obtained Sri Bankubeharijiu from Sri Nidhuvan. Now He is served in a regal style in Vrindavan. Sri Rupa Goswami and Sri Jiva Goswami lived near Sri Radha Damodara. Sri Sanatana, Sri Raghunatha Bhatta, Srihit Harivamsa, Sri Prabhodhanada and Surdasji all lived near Sri Madanmohan Temple.

SRI VISHWANATHA CHAKRAVARTIPAD

Mathura became very prosperous during the reign of Emperor Babur Humayun, Jehangir and Shah Jahan. Later on when Aurangzeb

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ascended the throne, Abdul Nabi Khan was appointed the Governor and in 1661 AD, he destroyed a Temple and built a huge Masjid over it. Gradually Aurangzeb's hatred for the Hindu community increased.

Soon in 1664, Sri Vishwanatha Chakravartipad came to Vraja and started living in Radhakund. There is some disagreement regarding his *prakat - kala*. According to Vaishnava digdarsini, it was from 1646 to 1754 which is 108 years. Sri Shyamalal Goswami Mahodaya has mentioned it from 1626 to 1708. We have heard that he was present during the famous judgement of Galta. (For more information look up the chapter on the composition of Vedanta bhashya). He came from a well-to-do family that lived in Saidabad of Murshidabad district (W. Bengal). He studied at home and became extremely learned. Later on, he obtained his brother's permission and came to Vrindavan. In Vrindavan he assumed the leadership of the Vaishnava community. He wrote plenty of books and rendered great service to the Vaishnava world. Sri Krishna Bhavanamrita, Sri Gourangalilamrita, Aishwarya kadambini, Madhurya kadambini, Stavamritalahari, Ragavartmachandrika, Camatkarachandrika, Gauragana-swarupa-tattva-chandrika, Ksanada-gita-cintamani, Sindhubindu, Ujjwala kirana, Bhagavatamrita-kana are some of the texts written by him. He also wrote many purports and commentaries. After Sri Rupa Goswami, he was the only one who wrote so profusely. Due to this, some people called him an incarnation of Sri Rupa Goswami.

Some say that Sri Krishnacharan Chakravarti was his Spiritual Master. But it is not so since he has mentioned his Guru-pranali in Samkalpa kalpadrum. There he has proclaimed Sri Krishnacharan as his Parama - Guru. Sri Ganga Narayan Chakravarti of Saidabad was the disciple of Sri Narottam das Thakur Mahashaya. His disciple was Sri Krishnacharan Chakravarti. Sri Radharaman was Sri Krishnacharan Chakravarti's son and disciple. Vishwanatha Chakravarti was the disciple of Sri Radharaman. In due time, he took

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up the *vairagi* – *vesha* and accepted the name Harivallabh. (Some opine that he never took *vesha* at all).

Sri Vishwanatha was a great *pandit*, philosopher, supreme devotee, and full of *rasa*, supreme poet and the crest-jewel of Vaishnavas. The Brahmins of Sri Radhakund were angry with him in lieu of *Svakiya* – *parakiyavad* of Sri Radha- Govinda. They even tried to murder him. Due to this he moved to Patharpura in Sri Vrindavan. His worshiped Deity Sri Gokulananda Jiu is presently in Vrindavan. Earlier his *samadhi* was in Patharpura. Later on it was moved to Gokulananda and placed near the *samadhis* of Sripad Lokanatha and Srila Narottama Thakur.

THE DESTRUCTION OF TEMPLES IN VRINDAVAN

We have already mentioned how much Aurangzeb hated the Hindus. He started oppressing and torturing the Hindus more and more. This is the reason why Srinathji Gopal went away to Udaipur in 1668. The Jat sardar Kokil Singh (also known as Gokul Singh) got fed up of being oppressed. So he rebelled against the Emperor. Angered by this, Aurangzeb destroyed the Adi-Kesava Mandir in 1669 AD and constructed a Masjid over it.

When Srimanmahaprabhu had visited Vrindavan in 1514, only four Deities had been present— Sri Adi-Kesava, Haridev of Govardhan, Baby Krishna at Nandagram and Laksmi-Narayan at Sesasayi. Earlier the Lodhi Kings of Afghanishtan had destroyed the Adi-Kesava Mandir. Later on, during the reign of Badshah Jahangir, Virsimhadev spent Rs. 33 lacs and rebuilt it. Aurangzeb again destroyed this very Temple in 1669. The kamdar of Gwalior once again built it in 1850. In 1983, the family of Viharilal Agrawal of Sanoli (Haryana) repaired it.

It was a night in the year 1670 AD. From atop the Agra fort, Aurangzeb saw a light in the dishtance. On inquiring, he learnt that it

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was shining from Sri Govindadev Temple in Vrindavan. Immediately he ordered the Temple to be destroyed. The Hindu officers working under the Badshah were alarmed and sent a message to Vrindavan that night itself. Vrindavan was filled with terror. Everybody got busy and hurriedly made Sri Govindadev, Sri Madanamohan, Sri Gopinatha, Sri Radha-Damodar, Sri Radhavinod and Sri Vrindadevi ready to leave. The Deities left for Jaipur before the Imperial army touched the soil of Vrindavan. Sri Vrindadevi came as far as Kamyavan and ordered that she would not go anywhere leaving Vrajadham. So she remained in Kamyavan. The remaining Deities went to Jaipur in order to be served there. Sri Ramsingh, the eldest son of Raja Jaisingh I served Their Lordships. Later on, Ramsingh offered Sri Madana Mohan Jiu to his sister's husband, the King of Karauli, who served the Lord well.

Now, when the Imperial army reached Vrindavan and heard that the Deities had already vanished, they were furious. They destroyed the Temples and desecrated the sanctum sanctorum. They broke the beautifully-carved and highly attractive pinnacle of Sri Govinda Dev Mandir and built a Mosque-like dome on top with bricks. The Deities did not return to Vrindavan. It is written in Bhakta-kalpadrūm that replicas of the Deities were installed within 1748, during the reign of Muhammad Shah, the King of Delhi. Sri Nandakumar Basu constructed the present Temples of Sri Govinda, Sri Madanmohan and Sri Gopinatha in 1819.

The old Temple of Sri Govinda Dev was greatly ruined. It is very sad since it was the greatest testimonial of art and architecture in North India. Sri Grouse, the British Collector of Mathura realized this. He collected money from the Government and other sources and rebuilt the Temple in 1873. He got the mosque-like structure removed and handed it over to the Government under the protection of Ancient Heritage Act. When Aurangzeb attacked Vrindavan, the Vaishnavas left Mathura-Vrindavan and shifted to Sri Radhakund, Barsana etc. Aurangzeb had renamed Mathura and Vrindavan as Islamabad and

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Mominabad respectively, whereas, Akbar Badshah had called Vrindavan as Fakirabad (the land of Saints).

Auranzeb died in 1707 AD. After his death, the huge Mughal Empire crashed. The succeeding Emperor Bahadur Shah was embroiled in family quarrels. On the other side the Marathas and Jats raised their heads in rebellion. Now the boundary of the Mughal Empire was limited to a few kilometers away from Delhi. During the reign of Badshah Firaq Liyar, Raja Jaisingh II, the great grandson of Raja Jaisingh I, the King of Ambar, ruled in Rajasthan. His reign was from 1699 to 1743. He is the one who built the present Jaipur City. Vidyadhar Bhattacharya, a Bengali Brahmin was his advisor.

THE DEITY OF RADHARANI

We have already mentioned how Sri Govinda and Sri Madanmohan arrived to accept service from Sri Rupa and Sanatana respectively. They were not accompanied by any Deity of Radharani. Later on, the King of Orissa, Sri Purushottam Jana, the son of Gajapati Maharaj Prataparudra (King Prataparudra was a disciple of Sri Goursundar) sent two Deities of Srimati Radharani for the above mentioned Deities. Mother Janhava got Sri Radharani's Deity made for Lord Gopinatha.

When Their Lordships left for Jaipur, the Deities of Radharani accompanied Them and They were served as well. The Gaudiya Vaishnavas who served Them in Vrindavan accompanied the Deities to Jaipur and served Them there.

THE COMPOSITION OF VEDANTA - BHASHYA

In 1718, some members of another sect raised an objection in the court of Raja Sawai Jaisingh (Jaisingh II) regarding the worship of Radharani. They were of the opinion that it was against the scriptural

laws to worship Sri Radharani along with Lord Govinda. They also stated that the present servitors (the Gaudiya Vaishnavas) had no right to serve since they had no 'Vedanta – bhashya' (purport to the

Vedanta) to their credit, and hence were not to be included in the Vaishnava fold.

In the seventh century, Sri Shankaracharya revived the Vedic Sanatana Dharma from the clutches of Shunyavad or Buddhism. In order to do so, he composed a Vedanta – Bhashya and established a rule that to propagate a particular philosophy, it must be based on the Vedic scriptures and that it should be clearly outlined in the form of a Vedanta – Bhashya. If not, then such a philosophy must not be allowed to enter the spiritual realms of India. Hence this was an ancient tradition being followed till the present times. Sri Rupa, Sanatana, Jiva etc. knew that Srimad Bhagavatam was the natural purport (Bhashya) to the Vedanta. Hence they preached the philosophy of Sri Goursundar based on Srimad Bhagavatam. They had not attempted to write any Vedanta-Bhashya to corroborate Mahaprabhu's teachings. Hence in those days, Gaudiya Vaishnavas had no Vedanta-Bhashya.

The King was forced to separate the Deity of Sri Radharani from Lord Govindadev and he stopped the *seva* rendered by the Bengali *pujaris*. However Raja Sawai Jaisingh was very intelligent. He rapidly sent this news to Vrindavan. He invited the Vaishnavas living in Vrindavan to come quickly and protect their self – respect as well as *seva*. Sri Vishwanatha Chakravartipad, although present at that time, could not go there due to extreme old age. Hence he sent the eminent *pandit* Sri Baladev Vidya Bhushan as a representative. Sri Vidya Bhushan was a member of the Shyamananda disciplic succession. In 1704 he was the servitor of Sri Shyamasundar who was installed by Sri Shyamananda. Later on he had accepted *vairagya* and the name 'Govinda Das.' He performed solitary Bhajan in

Govardhan. Vidyabhushan Mahashaya went to Jaipur. He obtained the merciful order of Lord Govinda Dev and he miraculously completed the Vedanta-bhashya within barely a week, inside the Temple itself. He then displayed it to the opponents and proved once and for all that the worship of Sri Sri Radha – Govinda (in the conjugal from) is very much in accordance with the scriptures. He thus procured the seva of the Deities of Jaipur for the Gaudiya Vaishnavas once more. Till today the Gaudiyas are engaged in this *seva*. This incident became famous as the Judgement of Galta. Since it had been possible to compose the Vedanta – Bhashya by the mercy of Govinda Dev alone, Sri Baladev named it as ‘Govinda – Bhashya’.

Besides this, Sri Baladev also wrote Prameya – Ratnavali, Siddhanta – ratna, Gita – Bhashya, purport to Tattva – Sandarbha etc. It is clear from all these incidents how the helpless Gaudiya Vaishnavas have shouldered much suffering and trouble, in the face of all odds, in order to protect the glory of their *sampradaya* and the incomparable achievements of the Goswamis.

Gradually, the Mughal power came to an end. During the reign of Alamgir II, in 1751, Nadir Shah attacked Mathura. His captain, Ahmad Shah Durrani managed to destroy whatever little had survived the barbaric acts of Aurangzeb. The Mughal Empire had nearly disappeared. There was an uprising of the rebellious Jats of Bharatpur. Chudamani was their first leader. His brother Badansingh built the fortress of Bharatpur in 1733. In 1752, Surajmal, the son of Badansingh had a dispute with Delhi. In 1761, he conquered Agra, but was killed by the Mughal army in 1763.

Surajmal had built a fortress in a place called Digh. Surajmal's wife **Rani Kishori** was supremely devout. She wished to extend some monetary help to the *virakta Vaishnavas* who refused to accept royal wealth (since they felt it was tainted by materialism). So Rani Kishori made cow-dung cakes, sold them and offered the proceeding to the Vaishnavas. They could not refuse it. This offering was termed as

'Bharatpurur Bant' (offering of Bharatpur). Earlier the Vaishnavas of Sri Radhakund were offered Rs. 20 per month, later on they got Rs.10. Now it has stopped. When Raja Surajmal was killed, his son Jawahar Singh built a *samadhi* for his father in 1764 and paved the banks of Kusum sarovar with stone. Jawahar's brother Ratan Singh had a son named Ranjit Singh, whose wife Lakshmi Rani owns a cottage in Vrindavan.

THE DEITY OF BARSANA

Sri Narayan Bhatta, a South Indian Brahmin arrived in Vraja when Sri Rupa – Sanatan lived in Vrindavan. The Deity of Radharani was under a heap of onions in a Muslim's house. She appeared in a dream to Narayan Bhatta and ordered him to install Her and serve Her. She also ordered him to get married and become a householder. Following this, Bhattji took the Deity of Srimati Radharani and installed Her in Barsana, Radharani's birthplace. Sri Ruparam, who was the royal priest of Bharatpur built a Temple for Sri ji. Sri Hargulal Sheth has built the new Temple.

Sri Narayan Bhattji started the custom of staging Lord Krishna's pastimes in the form of song and dance, as also the touring of all the twelve forests of Vrindavan on foot. He composed many texts that extol the glories of Sri Vrajadham. His *Gadi* is situated near Unchagram in Barsana. Bhattji's devotion has caused many miraculous happenings. Sri Krishnadas Brahmachari, who was Sri Gadadhar pandit's disciple, lived in Sri Radhakund. Bhattji is said to have taken initiation from him. However his descendents do not accept this.

Amidst the fighting between the Mughal Badshah, Scindia, Marathas, Bharatpur and the British, Mathura fell in the hands of Scindia. In 1803 AD when the Scindias made peace with the British, they surrendered Mathura to the British. The British made Raja Laxman Singh the *zamindar* of Govardhan. Since then the law and order

situation in this region has been stable and the Deities of Sri Vrajamandal have been served without much tension.

THE MAHANTAS OF SRI RADHAKUND AND SOME INTERESTING FACTS

Now let us take a look at the Mahanta *parampara* of Sri Radhakund from 1533 AD to 1987 AD, starting with Srimat Raghunathdas Goswami-----

- 1) **Srimat Raghunath Das Goswamipad-----** During his tenure, Sri Radhakund, Sri Shyamakund and the land around them were bought and the kunds were dug up. This is recorded in seven deeds. Both the lakes were cleaned during this time. On the Vijaya Dashami of 1576 AD, he handed over total ownership of the lakes to Sri Jiva Goswami. It has been recorded in a deed of gift in the following manner-----

A COPY OF THE DEED OF GIFT : (in Persian)

"Muhammad Hafiz Khadim sarah Muhar Daftar Qazi. Hibanama va Muhar Sariyat panaha Qazi Badruddin va tariq 7 riq maha Rajab san 996 Hijri.

Main ki Gonsai Raghunathdas hum, jo ki Muwaza 6 kita zamin vake atraf talav muje Arit amla pargana sahar bamozim tamsukat muqaddaman mauza majkursw do sau adtis rupiye me kharid ki thi. Usko apne zindagi durasti, hosh o hawas me apni razabandi o khwaish se Musammi Jiva Gonsai valed vallabh Gonsai ko bech di Aur Nazar kar di aur rupiya vasool pa liya. Aur tamsukat apne namke jo muqadami apse likhwaye the Gonsai mazkur ko de diye. Ta ki bad me muqadda man zamin par dava na kare."

Meaning :

"This deed is drawn up in the office of Judge Muhammad Hafiz Khadim, dated 7 riq maha Rajab. 996 Hijri.

I, Raghunathdas Gonsai, who had bought the lakes of Arit for Two hundred and thirty-eight rupees, have sold this property in good health, complete sense and willingly, to Sri Jiva Gonsai, the son of Vallabh Gonsai. I have conferred the property to him and have received the money. No one should have a claim to this property."

2) Srimat Jiva Goswamipad

3) Srila Krishnadas ji : - We have a copy of a deed of promise (Ikrarnama) signed by Bari Khan Haider, Gaddar and Muqaddam dated 6th May 1842 AD-----

" Muttalik Gonsai Kisandasji Garaz is lekh ke Yeh ki Bari khan, Haider, Gaddar, Muqaddam mauja Aritke hain, jo ki nalapani pahunchane ki Radhakund ka hai, agar is jagah me kheti karenge to kasurdar kanun Badshah Mirza ka Honge. Yeh bat 'o' tarikh sanand ki likh di ki nalaki bahalki sanand rahe, Agar koi darkhat katenge to kasurdar honge."

Meaning : "This deed is addressed to Gonsai Kishandasji and is written by Bari Khan, Haider, Gaddar and Muqaddam of Arit lake (Radhakund). If we use the water or land of Radhakund for cultivation, we will be considered offenders of the Emperor. We are giving this in writing for the welfare of the lake. If anyone cuts any tree he should be considered an offender of the law"

4) Sri Nanda Kishor ji

5) Sri Vrajakumar das ji -- (An English translation of the Imperial warrant dated 25th April, 1672 AD)--

“ Gani Khan Hasan Alam Sahi, (Aurangzeb) 1672. The present and future superintendents of Sahar Pargana are hereby informed that Gonsai Vrajakumar is complaining that he lives in Radhakund in Village Arit, Shar Pargana and he has planted trees etc. in that region. The villagers are forcibly restricting him, cutting the trees and are carrying away the stones from all around. Hence it is decreed that you must look into the complaint and take the steps necessary in order to enable the plaintiff to carry on with his prayers in a peaceful mind. You must issue a warning to the outlaws in order to stop them from cutting the trees and taking away the stones from his property. Take special care of this matter. 7th Muharram, 1083.”

It is worth noting that in those days the Gaur Rajputs owned the village. They called the Bengalis as ‘ foreigners ‘. They simply could not tolerate the fact that these ‘ foreigners’ were not kow-towing to them, not paying any tax and were enjoying freedom in their land.

6) Sri Gopiraman Das ji :-

During his tenure, Emperor Muhammad Shah issued three warrants in Persian. Sripad Das Goswami Panchayat carefully preserves them. The English translation is as follows ---

a) "30th July, 1721 AD: Sayyad Izzat Khan Bahadur, Subordinate Muhammad Shah Gazi.

Gopiraman Das, a resident of Vrindavan, is complaining to the fearless Muhammad Hyat (Emperor) that his ancestors have bought property in Radhakund village, Sahar pargana, and have built lakes and gardens therein. Nathuram, a resident of Maljhola of Mathura City is creating some problem over that property. Hence you are being ordered to look into the details of the matter attentively and if

the complaint is true then you must put an end to the problem. If the complaint is proved false than you must furnish the information to this effect. Written on 16th Shawal, 2 julus, 1133 Hijri."

b) "18th September, 1721 A. D.

The Commissariat agents of the present and future police officer of Islamabad sub - division of Mathura District are being informed that, under the seal of the Controller of estate dated 17th shawal, 2 Julus, Prime Minister Mulk-i-Ami Uddaula is issuing a warrant to the Government officers that Jiva Goswami, the former owner had bought property in the village Arit alias Radhakund and had built lakes and gardens on it. Now a person named Nathuram, resident of Mathura has usurped some portion of this property with the help of some others and is trying to build a wall over it. I was asked to look into the case and was ordered to ascertain the truth and stop the outrage. Accordingly, I have investigated the matter, looked up all documents and have taken the signatures of most venerable witnesses. It is clear that the disputed land belongs to Jiva Goswami and there is no partner in that ownership. No one else should have dispute over that land. Dated 27th Jilhuz year 2 Julus 17th shawal - 1133 Hijri."

Based on this investigation report, the following order was issued.

c) "16th September, 1722 A. D. :

Under the joint seal of Sadat Khan Bahadur and Bahadur Jung - Warrant dated 16th Jilhuzat. This is to inform the present and future officers of Sahar sub-division, Agra division that Gopiramandas, a resident of Vrindavan has stated in his complaint that Jiva Goswami had built lakes and gardens in a land bought by him in Arit alias Radhakund village. In the above-mentioned sub-division, some people, out of animosity, are obstructing him and forcibly cutting trees. Hence you are being informed that you should conduct investigation to ascertain the truth and make such arrangements that

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none should obstruct the rightful owner of the property and there is no room for any further complaint.”

From all these documents we learn that the Gaur Rajputs disliked the fact that the Gaudiya Vaishnavas of Radhakund were not subservient to them and lived independently, building gardens and bhajan *kutirs*. Hence they made all sorts of excuses to trouble the Vaishnavas and tried to drive them away from Radhakund. But the very powerful Government authority has always protected the Vaishnavas. Hence their sinister motives have not been successful. The following incidents will prove this even more. The all-renounced Vaishnavas, free of material desires, consider Sri Radhakund and Shyamakund, the most lovable wealth of Sri Das Goswami, as dearer than their lives. Hence, they have tolerated endless tyranny by the above mentioned *zamindar* and villagers and have been protecting this spiritual property with their life and soul for the past four hundred years and half. Each and every Gaudiya should be proud of this achievement!

The successive Mahants were as follows:

- 7) Sri Ananta Das ji
- 8) Sri Radhamohan Das ji
- 9) Sri Nityananda Das ji
- 10) Sri Paramananda Das ji
- 11) Sri Charan Das ji
- 12) Sri Govinda Das ji
- 13) Sri Purushottam Das ji

In 1776 when warren Hastings was the first Governor General of India, Sri Ganga Govinda was the *dewan* of Bengal. His son was Sri Pran Krishna. Pran Krishna's son was Sri Krishnachandra Sen who later on became famous as 'Lala Babu'. He was born in 1775. Earlier he worked in Burdwan. Later on he become the Dewan of Orissa. When *vairagya* awakened in him, he came away to Vrindavan. In

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1810, he built a huge temple in Vrindavan and installed the Deity of Sri Krishnachandra. In 1817, he spent one lac rupees and paved all the four banks of Sri Radhakund with stone. We do not know who the Mahant was at that time. This is because only their names are recorded in serial order but not the dates when they took charge. Lala Babu had taken '*Vesh*' from Srila Krishnadasji Maharaj (Siddha Baba of Govardhan). He supported himself by begging. He disappeared in 1821.

A few years later many *bhajan* – *kutirs* were built in the gardens of Radhakund and many *sadhu* – *Vaishnavas* took shelter on the banks of Sri Radhakund in order to perform *Bhajan*. On 13th October 1726, all the *virakta Vaishnavas* signed an agreement stating that they would abide by the laws of Gaudiya Vaishnavism and live in unity. If any one behaves contrarily, the Mahant would drive him out of the *kutir* and that person would be considered fallen in the Vaishnava community. Hence the Mahant of Sri Radhakund is called '**the owner of 150 *kutirs***'. The rule is valid till today.

Earlier we have said that in 1803, the British came into power and Maharaja Laksman Singh of Bharatpur gained the land of Govardhan from the British Raj. Our *panchayat* has an order issued in 1825, by the Maharaja of Bharatpur that reads as follows ---

“This is to inform the present and future officers of Govardhan by Laxmanji Sahay, Maharaja Vrajendra Sawai Baldeo Singh Bahadur, that the Bengali *vairagis* are living at Sri Radhakund and Govardhan in order to perform *Bhajan* and worship Sri Radha-Krishna. Hence it is being specially ordered that any landowner or *vairagis* of any other *sampradaya* should not disturb them in any way and you must protect them so that these Bengali *vairagis* may meditate on God peacefully.
7th Pausha, 1881 samvat”

In 1835, one Shahji spent a lot of money and installed a Deity in Vrindavan. In 1861, Laxmichand Sheth spent Rupees 45 lacs and

built the famous Sri Rangaji Temple for his Spiritual Master Sri Ranganath Swami. At present this huge temple is being managed by trustees.

14) Sri Vaishnava charana dasji –

We have already mentioned that the *zamindars* of Sri Radhakund were the Gaur Rajputs. They failed to pay tax to the British and this property was auctioned. Half the land was bought by the above mentioned Rangaji Swami while the other half was bought by Pitambar Singh, the *zamindar* of Abagarh. Lord Auckland, the then Governor General conferred the title 'Raja' on him.

Pitambar's son was named Prithviraj whose son was Balwant whose son was Suryapal. When Raja Prithvisingh become the owner, he usurped four *bhajan kutirs* and land no. 942 from the *virakta* Vaishnavas with the help of some villagers such as Chunnilal, Bhoja and Brijmohan. Hence the contemporary Mahanta Sri Vaishnava charan dasji filed a suit, in order to recover the said land and *kutirs*, in the Agra court on 7th June, 1875. Then the sub – judge was Maulvi Mohammad Abdul Qayyum Khan. Mahanta Sri Vaishnava charan das left for the spiritual abode before the judgment was delivered.

15) Sri Gouranga das ji —

The judgment of the above mentioned case was delivered in his time. He gained victory in the case and regained the usurped property. It was established that the *virakta* Gaudiya Vaishnavas have held rights to the *kutirs* since a long time, in succession, and no *zamindar* has any right over this property. It was proved that Sri Vaishnava charan das ji and the earlier Mahants were indeed the rightful owners of 150 *kutirs*. In this manner, the desire – free Vaishnavas, who are the pride of India, were termed 'foreigners' by the local landlords. They unleashed tyranny over the Vaishnavas. When they were unsuccessful, they instigated the simple villagers against them. As a

result there has been a dispute between the Vaishnavas and the villagers since 1849 AD. In 1865, once again there was an investigation and it was conclusively proved that the lakes as well as the property attached to their banks belong to the Vaishnavas.

- 16) Sri Yamuna Das Ji
- 17) Sri Gopidas Ji
- 18) Sri Narasimha Das Ji.———

He filed a complaint in 1887 AD in the court of Lala Alopi Prasad, the judicial officer of Mathura, against a Manipuri, Sri Ananda das ji. The judgment proclaimed that only a Bengali could become the Mahant of Sri Radhakund and not a Manipuri.

During the tenure of Sri Narasimha das ji there was a difference in opinion amongst all Gaudiya Vaishnavas whether Sri Gouranga Mahaprabhu should be worshiped with a separate Goura Mantra. This dispute reached Sri Radhakund as well. The supporters of Goura Mantra started living separately in a place called 'Nutan Ghera.' They did not remain subordinate to the Mahant of Sri Radhakund. We should note that, at present all the Vaishnavas residing in Sri Radhakund worship Sri Gouranga with Sri Goura Mantra only. It was during this time that Rajarshi Vanamali Roy Bahadur of Tarash built Sri Radha Vinod Mandir in Sri Radhakund.

- 19) Sri Gurucharan Das Ji ———

During his tenure, in 1901 AD, Sri Swarupa dasji, who was a desire-free Vaishnava, begged from common people, twelve to thirteen thousand rupees and paved all the four banks of Sri Shyamakund with stones. The entire undertaking was managed by the office of the above mentioned Rajarshi Bahadur.

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At this time, Girish Babu of Calcutta built a canopy called 'Ratnavedi' with marble stone on the *sangam* and built a *dharmasala* to the east of Sri Kund.

Balwant Singh, the *zamindar* of Abagarh forcibly broke two Bhajan *kutirs* of the Vaishnavas and usurped that property. Hence Mahant Sri Guru Charan Das Ji filed a suit in the court of Mahavan in 1902. He left for the spiritual abode when the case was sub-judicial.

20) Sri Vrajananda das Ji --

He looked into the above-mentioned case. The judgement proclaimed that the past Mahant had the right to appoint the next Mahant in a will and the Mahant is the rightful owner of 150 *kutirs*. The broken bhajan *kutirs* were part of the 150 *kutirs* and were situated close to the *parikrama* - path. Hence although the disputant was the *zamindar*, the Vaishnavas have owned the *kutirs* since time immemorable and so they have the legal rights to this property. It was also decreed that even if the *kutirs* were ruined, the *zamindar* would never become the owner of the land. This case was fought for five years and had reached the Honorable High Court. The investigating officer, Inspector Harpal Singh of Govardhan had appeared as a witness in this case. The present Sri Nitai Gour Mandir has been established in some parts of those *kutirs* and the Deities are being worshiped there.

21) Sri Govinda Das Ji --

During his tenure, Queen Yogamaya of Paikpara took permission and paved the ghat where Mahaprabhu had rested under the Tamala tree (now called Tamal - tala).

22) Sri Jagadanada das Ji - (1912 - 1920 AD) -

Sri Balwant Bhai Saheb was the brother of the Maharaja of Gwalior. He took initiation from Sri Haricharan Das ji of Kusum Sarovar and

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on his advice built a temple near Kusum Sarovar in 1913 and installed Sri Vighraha. The trustees of this temple offer monthly monetary help to all the Vaishnavas residing within the limits of 84 krosa Vrajamandal irrespective of their *sampradaya*.

In 1915 AD, the King of Abagarh, Raja Suryapal Singh, who was then a minor, demanded a tax of 2 paise per *kutir* and the total amounted to Rs. 168. He filed a suit against Sri Jagadananda Das Mahant in the Mathura Court (Case No. 223). The judge axed down this demand and ordered that the plaintiff had no ownership on this land. The king had also filed lawsuits against various Vaishnavas (case No. 210,215,296). These were also dismissed.

In 1918 AD, during the tenure of Sri Jagadananda Das Ji, the King of Manipur Spent Rs. 6500 and paved the *parikrama* path with stone and built light – posts for the convenience of the devotees at night. Also, during this time, Sri Radhakund become a municipality due to the laborious efforts of Sri Vrajamohan Das Ji.

23) Sri Radharaman das Ji

24) Sri Gour Das Ji

25) Sri Advaita Das Ji

26) Sri Sanatan Das Ji –

He assumed the post of Mahanta in 1925 AD. During his tenure, Jnan Babu built a small temple in the place where Srimanmahaprabhu had rested, under the Tamala Tree.

23) Sri Krishna Chaitanya Das Ji --

The local Vaishnavas consider it part of Vaishnavism to keep the water (Nir) and banks (tir) of both the lakes clean, since they are non-different from the forms of Sri Sri Radha Krishna. But in 1929 AD the *zamindar*'s servants started obstructing the Vaishnavas when they removed the water hyacinth from the lakes. Then the Vaishnavas

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elected Sri Krishna Chaitanya das ji the Mahant of Sri Radhakund on 23rd April 1929 AD.

In the early phase of his life he was M.A. in English and Philosophy. He had also been a reputed deputy magistrate in Bengal. One day, in 1931, when Sri Madhavdas Babaji was cleaning Sri Kunda, the servants of the *zamindar* of Abagarh forcibly drove him out. This incident agitated the Vaishnavas extremely and the news spread all over Vrajamandal and Bengal. Everyone resolved to seek shelter of the court in this matter since it was extremely necessary to curb the villagers.

With the cooperation of venerable Vaishnavas such as Prabhupad Sri Prangopal Goswami, Srila Ramdas Babaji and others, Mahant Sri Krishna Chaitanya dasji filed a suit in the Mathura Court (case No. 482) against the King of Abagarh and Rangaji Swami on 5th November, 1931 AD. He did so in order to protect the rights of the Gaudiya Vaishnavas over the water (Jal) and land (sthal) of both Sri Kundas and so that no one could prevent the water from being cleaned. The case was fought very bitterly and was presented thrice before the Honorable Judge of High Court. Ultimately in 1937 AD, the judgement was delivered and the Vaishnavas won complete victory. Sri Krishna Chaitanya das Mahant Ji, Sri Uddharan Das Ji of Kusum Sarovar, Sri Nrsimhadasji of Bheje and many others had toiled endlessly to win this case. The retired judge of Patna High Court, Sri P. R. Das, Amarnath Chattopadhyay and Barrister Mr. Jaiswal fought the case in Mathura as well as Allahabad High Court on their own expenses (without accepting fees).

28) Sri Narahari Das Ji –

In 1940 and 1941 AD, Sri Priyanath Pal Mahashaya, a very famous and wealthy man from Dhaka took Sri Narahari dasji's permission and got all the foliage removed from the Sri Kundas by spending nearly 25000 rupees. In fact, the lakes were emptied totally and refilled with

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clean water. Also whatever repair was necessary for Shyamakund, it was done. When the mire was removed all were amazed to see the floor of the lakes covered with innumerable tiny fountains. Everyone said --“these fountains are separate tirthas.”

A kunda could be seen in the center of Sri Radhakund. It also had a fountain in it ---its water was ice – cold. It is called ‘**kankan kunda**’. When Sri Radharani accompanied by the sakhis dug Sri Radhakund, this small kund appeared due to the scratch made by Her bangle (kankan), hence the name ‘kankan kund’. Also there is a fountain of white milk inside Sri Radhakund. Whenever it appears, the water of Sri kund becomes milk – white. We have seen----once the water of Sri Radhakund became so white as if someone has poured thousands of gallons of milk in the kund. It is said to be the appearance of ‘**Kshira sagar**’ in Sri Radhakund, which is the abode of all *tirthas*.

Even Sri Shyamakund has a large kund in the center. It is called ‘**Vajrakund**’. It was dug by Sri Krishna’s great – grandson Vajranabh. Shyamakund also has many fountains. It is a miracle how they appeared so much high above, right after three steps only! The Kundas got refilled with the water of these fountains.

29) Sri Nabadweepa Das ji --

His earlier name was Sri Nagendra Nath Lahiri. He was a reputed lawyer in Rangpur. He was conferred the titles of ‘Sahitya Ratna’ (Literary Gem) and Bhagvat – Bhushan in Nabadweep. After practicing law for 26 years he came to Vrajadham. When Sri Krishna Chaitanya Das Ji was the Mahant, he had prepared all the documents, proofs, wills and translation of the scriptures and statements of witnesses for case No. 482. He had gone to Abagarh to persuade the King for an out – of – court settlement, but it was of no use.

When he became the Mahant he wrote a booklet called ‘History of Sri Radhakunda’. We have already mentioned in the preface that the

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historical facts presented here have been collected from that book. At the end of the book he has written ---

“ Who can unravel the mystery so as to why the all-renounced helpless *virakta* Gaudiya Vaishnavas living only on alms, the ones who have come to Vraja with the sole purpose of sadhan – bhajan, have had to tolerate so much material tension for four hundred years? What aim Sri Bhagavan has in performing such strange and contradictory pastimes is incomprehensible to the tiny living entity”.

During his tenure in 1945; a Manipuri devotee named Sri Bhumba Singh spent nearly 13000 rupees and built Sri Jiva Goswami's Bhajan *kutir*.

30) Sri Gouranga Das Ji (2nd)--He was the Mahant from 2nd September, 1955 to 11th April, 1957.

31) Sri Manohar das Ji ---- His tenure was from 12th April 1957 to 17th December 1959. In his time case no. 528 was filed in the Mathura court in the year 1958. The case involved a *kutir* near the parikrama path.

32) Sri Radha Krishna Das ji – He became the Mahant on 18th December 1959. He won victory in the above-mentioned case on 27th March 1963. Again thirteen *pandas* accompanied by Ramdas Baba of Nimbark *sampradaya* demanded a quadrangle on the sangam measuring 8' x 8' and also one below the Neem tree (nimtala). But they ran away when the case was still sub-judice. So by default, the case swing in the Mahant's favor. Also during his tenure the municipality tried to collect tax from the property of Sri das Goswami (cases No. 379 / 59). But this attempt was foiled. He was fearless and had worldly knowledge.

33) Sri Jay Nitai Das Ji

34) Sri Shachinandan Das Ji

Even now some cases involving the *pandas* and their wicked attempts in connection to the Sri Kundas are being fought in the Mathura sessions court and the High Court. As of now, the Mahanta has been winning. In spite of this, the opponents are carrying on in their attempts to harass and create monetary problems for the poor renounced Vaishnavas.

After Sripad Das Goswami, till today, the village chiefs, villagers and *pandas* have continuously tried to either drive away the *virakta* Vaishnavas or subjugate them. They are creating problems directly or indirectly in an uninterrupted manner. But by the mercy of Sri Bhagawan all their attempts are foiled.

We have already mentioned that in 1940-41, Sri Priyanath Pal Mahashaya had renovated the kundas and cleansed them of mire. After that 46/47 long years had passed. Once more it had become absolutely necessary to clean the lakes. Hence Mahant Srila Shachinandan Das Ji Maharaj and the *virakta* Vaishnavas residing in 150 *kutirs* achieved the Himalayan feat, by the mercy of Sri Radharani, of removing the mire. It was done on the auspicious occasion of Sri Gouranga Mahaprabhu's 500th appearance day celebration (15th March 1987 AD).

My humble request to all devout people— please donate freely for this great seva whenever *kunda-samskara* takes place and avail of the mercy of Srimanmahaprabhu and Sri Kundeshwari (Radharani). Also please always look after the poor and destitute Vaishnavas living only on begging so that this most priceless Bhajan-wealth of the universe does not fall in the clutches of greedy, power-hungry people with sinister motives. Please look after Sri Radhakund so that it does not become a petty usable property or family possession.

THE 'MUST - SEE' PLACES IN SRI RADHAKUND

There are many temples on both sides of the parikrama path. They are as follows :

Sri Janhava Mandir (here the Deities of Sri Sri Radha Gopinatha and Ishwari Janhava Thakurani are served), Sri Radha Raman Mandir , Sri Radha Govinda Mandir, Sri Gadadhar – Chaitanya-Sri Vishwambhar Mandir, Sri Vrajamohan Mandir, Sri Jagannath Mandir, Sri Radha Vallabh Mandir, Sri Radha Vinod jiu Mandir built inside the huge place of Rajarsi Banamali Roy Bahadur, Sri Biharijiu Mandir, Sri Lalitbiharijiu Mandir, Sri Radha Vinod Mandir built by the Raja of Manipur, Astasakhi Mandir, Sri Sitanath Mandir, Sri Radha – Madhava Mandir, Sriman Mahaprabhu's Mandir under the Tamala tree, Sri Madan Mohan Mandir, Sri Banku behari Mandir, Sri Goura Nitai Mandir, the newly built Sri Radha Govinda Mandir Barakuli, Sri Charan cinha, Sri Gopinath Mandir, Sri Radhakanta Mandir, Sri Shyamasundar Mandir, Sri Radha Damodar Mandir, Sri Radha Madhav Mandir in Srinivas Acharya's kunja, Sri Giriraj – jihva Mandir etc.

Other than these, there are a few *Baithaks*, *Bhajan sthalis* and *Samadhi – Mandirs*. A devotee must visit Srimanmahaprabhu's *baithak* under the Tamala tree, Sri Nityananda prabhu's *baithak* in Sri Gopinath Mandir, Srimata Janhava Thakurani's *baithak* in Sri Janhava ghat, Sri Madhavendra Puri's *baithak* in Vyas Ghera and Sri Vallabhacharya's *baithak* to the south of Shyamakund.

THE BEGINNING OF BHAJAN-KUTIR

Sri Raghunath das Goswami's Bhajan *Kutir* is to the north of Sri Shyamakund. The supremely renounced Sri Raghunath earlier performed Bhajan under a tree on the banks of Sri kunda. In those days, the banks were totally deserted and covered with dense forest.

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Once when Sripad was engrossed in deep meditation, a tiger passed him after drinking the water of the kund. Sripad Sanatan Goswamipad noticed this and ordered Sri Raghunath to perform bhajan inside a *kutir*. That was the beginning of Bhajan *kutir* in Sri Radhakund. It is described in Sri Bhaktiratnakar-----

“Raghunath lived day and night under the tree. He had no desire to build a *kutir*. Once Sanatana came from Vrindavan. He put up with Sri Gopal Bhatta. When he went to bathe in the Manas – pavan – ghat, he saw a tiger drinking water. Raghunath was engrossed in meditation. The tiger passed him and entered the forest. After some time, Raghunath looked around and saw that Sri Sanatana had come to bathe. He paid obeisance to him. Sanatana embraced him with affection. He told Raghunath slowly and lovingly---“ Hence forth you must not live under a tree, but build a *kutir* instead.” Stressing this the Goswami went for bath. That was the beginning of *kutir* in Sri Radhakund. For the welfare of others, Raghunath hence forth lived in a *kutir*, as ordered by Sanatan Goswami.”

--(5th wave)

Besides this there are the Bhajan *Kutirs* of Srila Gopal Bhatta Goswami, Srila Jiva Goswami and Srila Kaviraj Goswami, as also the spot where Sri Chaitanya Charitamrita was composed.

Sri Das Goswami's Samadhi Mandir is situated on the northern bank of Sri Radhakund. Mahant Sri Shachinandan das Maharaj has built a beautiful marble dome on the old Samadhi Mandir. Inside we can see the marble Samadhi, which is very attractive. Sri Giridhari is present in the south side of the Samadhi Mandir. The place is shaded by Madhavi creeper, which makes it even more enchanting. Due to the efforts of the servitor Sri Bhagvat Das Babaji Maharaj, non-stop Harinam sankirtan is being carried on in the sanctorum since Wednesday, 3rd Caitra Bangabda 1371.

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In the precincts of the bhajan *kutir* we find the Samadhis of Sri Raghunath Das, Sri Raghunath Bhatta and Sri Kaviraj Goswami. One must also visit the Samadhis of Sri Narahari Sarkar Thakur in Dhulikunj, Sri Sita Thakurani's (who is the potency of Sri Advaita) *sevika* Sri Nandini Mata in Nandini ghera and the famous Lala babu in Go-ghat. Besides these, there are many more Samadhis of respected Vaishnava preceptors and local Bhajananandi Vaishnava mahatmas in different places.

Around the kundas there are some ghats. Sri Radhakund is surrounded by Jhulantala, Radhakanta Ghat, Go - ghat, Ma Janhava Ghat, Das Goswami Ghat, Govinda Ghat, Sangam Ghat, Rasbari ghat etc. Sri Shyamakund is surrounded by Sri Manas pavan ghat, Panca Pandava Ghat, Radhavallabh Ghat, Rajbari ghat, Nandini ghera ghat, Sri Jiva Goswami ghat, Ghana Madhav Ghera Ghat, Gaya Ghat, Vyasa Ghera Chat, Astasakhi, Tamal-tala, Pasa khela, Madana mohan, Sangam ghat etc.

WHERE TO STAY IN RADHAKUND

Devotees from all over the world comes all year round to Sri Radhakund, the repose of all tirthas in search of *punya*. Especially in the month of Kartik, multitudes of devotees come here from many places to observe *niyam - seva*. They stay here for one month. Sri Radhakund starts resounding with blissful *shravan* and *kirtan* (hearing and chanting). Earlier, the visiting devotees had no place to stay in Sri kund. They had to spend a lot of money and stay in the *pandas'* houses. This humble writer has built a **Bhakta Nivas** (shelter for devotees) in front of Taras Mandir with the help of the devotees. It has good water supply and electricity. Some days back, a good devotee Sri Manoranjan Banik has built a huge and attractive dharmasala to the south of Sri Shyamakund. It is well - equipped with all sorts of facilities for the devotees.

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The two main festivals of Sri Radhakund are the appearance day of Sri Sri Janhava Thakurani celebrated in Sri Janhava Mandir and the disappearance day of Sripad Raghunath Das Goswami celebrated in the Samadhi Mandir of Sri Das Goswami. All expenses of these two celebrations are borne by Sri Mahant Maharaj and Pancayat Committee. Other than these, many more festivals are celebrated at different times during the year. On the appearance day of the Sri Kundas that is '**Bahulashtami**' or Kartik Krishnashtami, thousands and thousands of devotees flock here to take a dip in Sri Radhakund at midnight. On this occasion Sri Radhakund is decked like a newly wed bride.

In this Mahatirth, the main activities to be performed by the devotees are bathing, worshiping, *parikrama* and *dandavat*. Many visitors gain their wishes fulfilled by performing *seva* here. The Gaudiya Vaishnavas consider it praiseworthy to perform *tilaka - seva* with the earth from the bottom of Sri Radhakund. The most important blessing achieved by performing *seva* of this Mahatirth is ---

*" Ei Kunde ekbar yei kare snan
tare Radha - sama prem Krishna kare dan."*

— (C. C.)

Meaning :

*Radhakund is as sweet as Radha,
Radhakund is as glorious as Radha.*

*My dear devotees, pray
Listen to Lord Krishna say-*

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*"Whoever bathes even once
in this Kund so pure,
I grant him Radha-like love,
That's for sure!"*

Jay Sri Radhe

GLOSSARY

[MEANING OF THE INDIAN TERMS]

A

- ANTYA - LILA - Transcendental pastimes performed by Sri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu towards the end of His life.
- APSARA - Nymphs residing in heavenly planets but visiting the earth ; wives of Gandharvas- the heavenly musicians. They have the capacity to change their shapes at will.
- ASHTASAKHI - The eight principle friends of Radharani.

B

- BADSHAH - Emperor
- BAITHAK - Assembly
- BHAGAVAD- ANURAGA - Love for Sri Bhagawan
- BHAGAWAN - The Supreme Personality of Godhead Lord Krishna
- BHAJAN - KUTIR - A hut where devotional practice is performed.

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| BHAJAN STHALI | - A place where devotional practice is performed. |
| BHAJANANANDI | - One who is submerged in the bliss of Bhajan |
| BHAKTI | - Devotion |
| BHOGA | - An offering made to Krishna. |
| BHUMI | - Land |

C

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| CHANDI MANDAP | - A Place where Goddess Durga is worshipped. It is usually located in the outskirts of a house. |
| CHHATRA | - Alms house |

D

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| DEWAN | - Manager, secretary, finance minister of a Private Estate. |
| DHAM | - A Place where transcendental pastimes have been enacted. |
| DHARMASHALA | - Guest - House for pilgrims; religious asylum |

G

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| GADI | - Seat ; throne ; power |
| GALTA, JUDGEMENT OF | - The famous Judgement delivered in Galta, which established the credibility of Gaudiya Vaishnavism. |
| GHAT | - Wharf; landing place in a river ; bathing place. |

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| <p>GHERA
GOPA
GOPIS
GOSAIN
GOSWAMI
GOUR - VIRAHA
GOURANGA</p> | <p>- House
- Cowherd boys/men of Vraja
- Milkmaids of Vraja
- Same as Goswami
- One who has conquered his senses
- Pangs of separation from Sri Gouranga.
- The fair - complexioned one;
Sri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu.</p> |
| <p>GURU - PRANALI</p> | <p>- Channel or succession of Spiritual Masters.</p> |

J

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|-------------|------------------------|
| <p>JIVA</p> | <p>- Living Entity</p> |
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K

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| <p>KALIYUGA
KISHORI
KUNJA
KROSA or KOSA</p> | <p>- The age of quarrel and hypocrisy.
- A young maiden ; Radharani;
- Flower-grove
- Measure of distance equal to about two Miles</p> |
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L

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| <p>LILA</p> | <p>- Transcendental pastimes of Lord Krishna and His associates.</p> |
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M

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| <p>MADHUKARI</p> | <p>- Collecting alms only from five houses ;</p> |
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- It literally means - collecting small quantity of honey from each flower like a honey-bee (*madhukar*).
- MAHARAJA - Great King
- MAHAT KRIPA - Mercy bestowed by a great devotee.
- MAHATIRTH - Great pilgrimage
- MAHATMA - A Great religious soul
- MAHOTSAVA - Grand Feast.
- MALA - Garland, necklace
- MANDAL - Group ; gathering
- MANDIR - Temple
- MANJARI - Inflorescence; a cluster of blossoms (as in tulasi); tender aged friends cum maid - servants of Radharani.
- MARKAT - VAIRAGYA - Renunciation akin to that of a monkey. (A monkey is devoid of clothes and house. He subsists on fruits and nuts alone.. However, his mind is full of lusty desires and he associates with many female monkeys.)
- MASJID - Mosque

N

- NAMACHARYA - One who chants the holy name 3 lac times daily and always spreads the glory of the Holy Name. e.g. Haridas Thakur.
- NISHTHA - Firm ; steady ; resolute ; decided.
- NITYALILA - One who has entered the transcendental pastimes of Lord Krishna.
- NIYAM SEVA - Austerities performed in the month of Kartika.

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P

- PANCHAYAT - Village - Council
 PANDA - Brajavasi priests
 PANDIT - Wise man ; learned man.
 PARAKIYAVAD - A theory which says Lord Krishna was not married to the Gopis.
 PARAMA GURU - The Spritual Master's Spiritual Master.
 PARAMPARA - Continuous order; lineage; family.
 PARIKRAMA - Circumambulation
 PRAKAT - KALA - Span of existence of the Supreme Personality, His associates and devotees on the earth; life - span.
 PRARABDHA - The past actions (karma) that have already borne fruit and whose result we are getting in this life.
 PREMA - Love
 PREMA- KALPA TARU - The wish-fulfilling love - tree
 PREMA-KALPA LATIKA- The wish-fulfilling love - creeper
 PREMAMAYA - Loving
 PUJARI - Priest; worshiper
 PUNYA - Merit ; virtue

R

- RASA - Mellow , sentiment , flavor , juice.
 RAAS - LILA - The transcendental dance performed by Lord Krishna with the Gopis.

S

- SADHU - Saint ; sage

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SADHYA-SADHANA-

TATTVA

- The ultimate goal of human birth and how to achieve it.

SAMPRADAYA

- Established doctrine transmitted from one preceptor to another.

SAMSKARA

- Repair ; clean ; improve ; recondition ; instinct ; impression ;

SANDESH

- News ; a Bengali sweet made from milk.

SANGAM

- Confluence of the Lakes

SANKIRTANA - RASA

- Joy of congregational singing of the Holy Name.

SANNYASA

- The renounced order

SHANTI

- Peace

SARDAR

- Leader

SEVAKA

- Servant , attendant

SIDDHA

- Self - realized soul

SIDDHA - DEHA

- The original form of the living entity as an associate of Sri Bhagawan.

SHILA

- Stone, rock.

SMARAN

- Meditating on the transcendental Pastimes of Krishna.

SMARANI - SEVA

- To render service to Lord Krishna and Sri Mahaprabhu by entering their pastimes in meditation.

SRI DHAMVAS

- Living in Dham

SRI DHAMVASI

- Residents of Dham.

SRI VIGRAHA

- Deity of the Supreme Personality of Godhead.

SVAKIYAVAD

- A theory which says Lord Krishna was married to the Gopis.

SWARUPA

- The Original form (also Look up Siddha Deha)

T

- TAPASYA - Austerities
TILAKA - An ornamental mark made on the forehead
in order to please Krishna.
TILAKA SEVA - The act of adorning onself with tilaka.

V

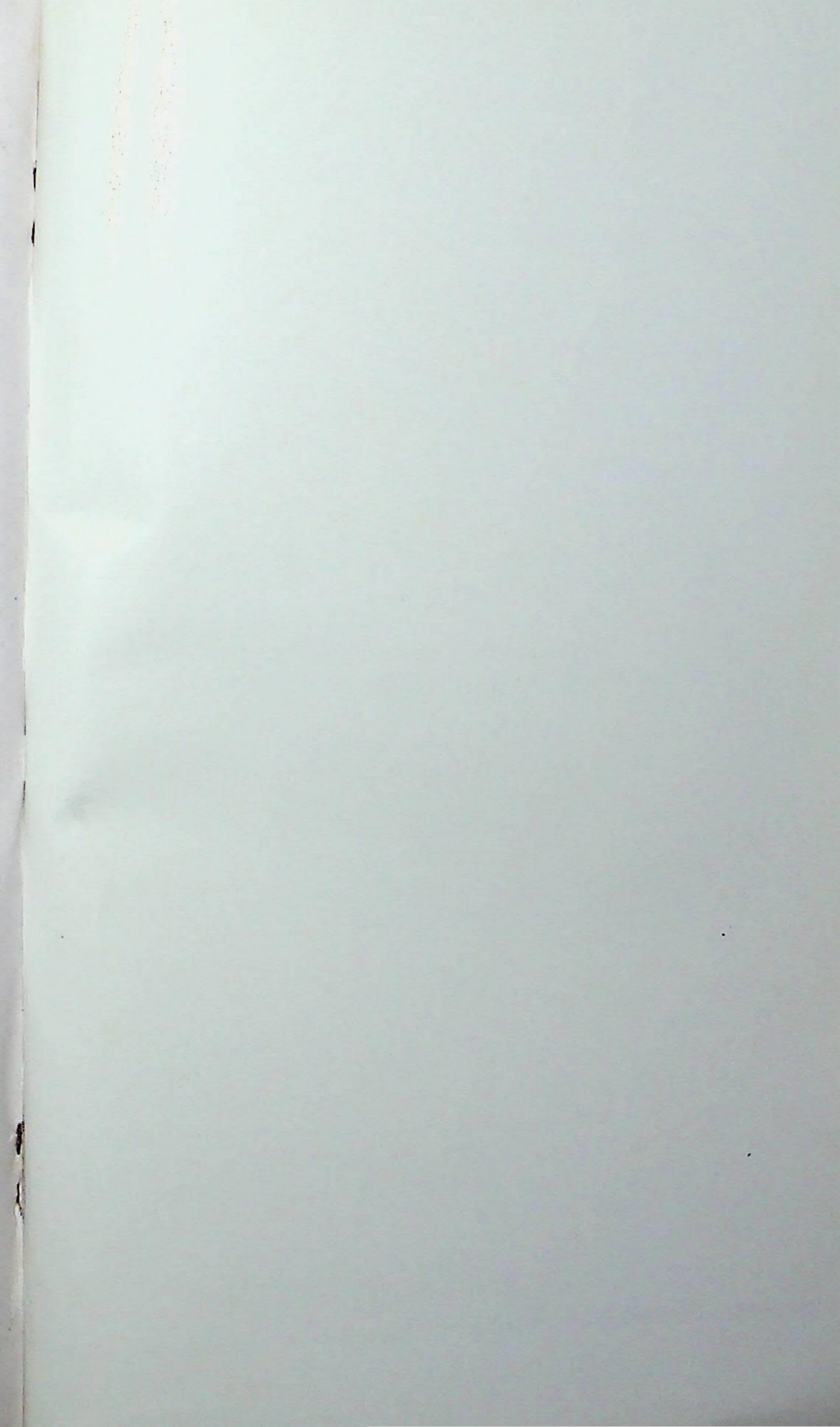
- VAIRAGI VESHA - The garb of the renounced order
VIGRAHA - Same as Sri Vighraha
SRI VIGRAHA - Deity
VIRAHA - Separation
VIRAKTA - Renounced; detached

Z

- ZAMINDAR - Caretaker of a village; landlord

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS USED

- C.C - Sri Chaitanya Charitamrita
S.B - Srimad Bhagavatam



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ABOUT THE BOOK

The ancient **Vedic** text, **Sri Padmapurana** says -

*"Yatha radha priya vishnostasyah kundam priyam tatha,
Sarvagopisu sevaika vishnoratyanta vallabha."*

Which means -

"Sri Radhakund is as dear to Lord Vishnu as Sri Radha Herself.
It serves all the Gopis and Lord Vishnu loves it immensely."

Sri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu has stated
(translated from Bengali) -

**Radhakund is as sweet as Radha,
Radhakund is as glorious as Radha.**

**My dear devotees, pray
Listen to Lord Krishna say -**

**"Whoever bathes even once in
This Kund so pure,
I grant him Radha-like love,
That's for sure!"**

Sripad Rupa Goswami has stated -

*"Mathura is greater than Vaikuntha; within Mathura Sri Vrindavan is greater since it is the location of the Raas-lila festival. Therein Sri Govardhan is greater since Sri Govinda enacts His pleasure sports here. Therein **Sri Radhakund** is greater since it is flooded with the nectarine love of Gokulapati Sri Krishnachandra. Is there any conscious person who would not serve **Sri Radhakund** that is present at the foothills of Govardhan?"*